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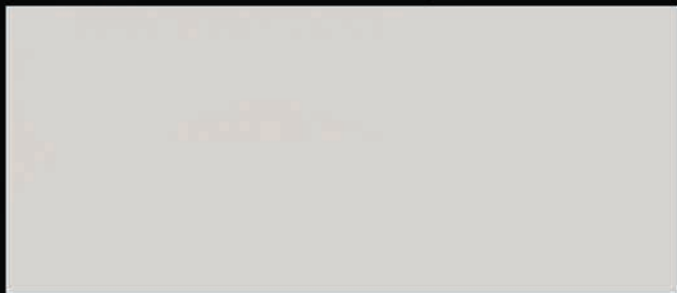
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THE AMERICAN Legion

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For God and Country

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The American Legion Magazine, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its 2.7 million members. These wartime veterans, working through 15,000 community-level posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.

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Rights at risk

Among the charges leveled against King George in the Declaration of Independence was that he had “combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our Constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws ... transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offenses.” Americans in uniform and all citizens may face the same predicament by the International Criminal Court (“Unauthorized Authority,” October).

One of the most cherished rights of Americans threatened by the ICC is the right to a jury trial by one’s peers. Americans would enjoy none of the privileges and immunities provided under our constitutional justice system. Once indicted by the ICC, a suspect would be considered guilty unless proven innocent and may be arrested and imprisoned for an unspecified time before being brought to trial. If convicted, the accused has no right to appeal other than to the very tribunal that has just condemned him.

I will not travel overseas until I can be assured that my rights are protected worldwide. With the ICC now active, I just lost that assurance.

—Gerry R. Coleman, Raleigh, N.C.

Pull America out

I respectfully suggest that the United States immediately recall all civilian officials, all uniformed military personnel and all foreign aid from each and every country that has ratified a signature to the International Criminal Court. Let us not continue to support and defend those who seek the downfall of this great nation.

—Eldon D. Hinckley, Highland, Utah

Not all guilty

I appreciate *The American Legion Magazine*’s publishing of a commentary regarding a hot business topic: accounting fraud (“The

Accounting Apocalypse,” October). I have worked in the corporate accounting field for a number of years, as well as having taught accounting and finance courses at various universities. The points raised by the authors regarding the conduct of certain public accounting firms are on target. However, the authors also need to stress a couple of additional points.

First, the “books” are owned by and are the responsibility of company management, not the external auditors. Public accountants who go along with deceiving the market need to be held to task. However, business management ethics should be the main focus. Second, where are the internal, or management, accountants? Internal accountants have a responsibility to prepare ethical reports and notify the board of directors – and if necessary, law-enforcement agencies – of fraudulent reporting.

To say that the accounting profession is unwilling to save itself is a broad statement and assumes all are guilty because of a few who have been exposed. Additional government regulations are rarely the answer; enforcement of existing regulations is.

—John Schlaack, Imlay City, Mich.

Require photo IDs

In his article “Stolen Identities” (October), Gary Turbak recommends signing all credit cards.

That’s a good way to facilitate use of a card by someone else should it be stolen or found by an unscrupulous person. I was under the impression that it is better to write in the area for the signature “see photo ID” so the merchant, if cautious, would be required to ask for something such as a photo driver’s license with your signature on it. In my experience, however, it is infrequent that a merchant looks at a card for a signature and even more infrequent that a merchant will ask to see my driver’s license.

While there may be no infallible way to protect one’s identity, it seems that requiring a merchant to ask for a photo ID is better than signing credit cards. If a thief is looking for a quick and easy score, it stands to reason that the thief will take the easy way out and discard such credit cards rather than go to the trouble of creating a fraudulent photo ID.

—Leo Dougherty, Spring Hill, Fla.

Still waiting

I must take issue with the information in the article “Legion Urges Vets to Enroll in VA” (Legion News, October). What it says is not what happens when a Class 7 veteran enrollee applies for medical care. Our clinic in Brooksville, Fla., has been overloaded since day one, and it’s impossible to be assigned a primary-care doctor.

I have an eye infection that needs care, but they have no eye doctor. In order to be assigned an eye doctor I must have a primary-care doctor. I can’t get a primary doctor, so there is a stalemate. The clinic offers none of the alternative-care methods you describe. I have been in the program since December 1999 and got a card from VA in April 2001 saying the clinic was overloaded and to contact Tampa if I need medical care. Tampa is offering a two-year wait. Tell the new veterans who sign in, as you recommend, that they should not expect to be served.

—Robert D. Brannan, Brooksville, Fla.

Bad advice

In his article “No Time for Timidity” (October), Alan Dowd states that countries that harbor

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terrorists should get rid of them, and if they don't, the United States should go to war with those countries. Therefore, Dowd says, we should invade Libya, Iran, Iraq, North Korea and Syria. That's five wars. If we follow his advice, we better start the draft and make our small army bigger.

— George Casleton, Moweaqua, Ill.

One war at a time

Alan Dowd's article is one of the most dangerous that ever appeared in our magazine. No sane military leader would condone mission creep; they need a clearly defined mission for which they can obtain the men and materiel to complete it. Mission creep is what got our men killed in Somalia.

Dowd cites past successes of our military. These were accomplished by a nation that had military conscription, a 1,000-ship navy, 20 aircraft carriers and a 2-million-man army. We cannot expect to operate on that scale again. Our war is against al-Qaida; let's concentrate on winning it first before getting involved on other fronts.

— Larry Robideau, Naples, Fla.

Grave injustice

I was impressed by Sen. Bob Smith's article "Disabled Veterans Deserve Fairness" (October). His idea to award disability benefits to retired veterans with service-incurred physical or mental impairment is excellent and one that should be adopted. A retired veteran on a pension who also is substantially disabled by a combat wound, for example, should not be limited to the same benefits as retired, non-disabled veterans.

While Congress is at it, it should consider removing the bar to the full World War II veterans' disability pension for those of us who still need to work to support ourselves. The government discontinued such unfairness under Social Security by allowing retirees to work without a reduction in their benefits. It's time to correct this injustice for qualified veterans still living with a condition inflicted by the enemy during wartime. The truth is that we are disappearing

from society at an ever-increasing rate. Don't let the problem be solved by simply waiting until all the veterans have died off. America can do better than that.

— Donald E. Casey, Chicago

Don't block votes

I just love Sen. Patrick Leahy's accusations of Republicans being guilty of extreme ideology ("Mandatory Vote on Judicial Picks," Big Issues, October). Translation: anyone who opposes my views and the views of my Democratic colleagues on the Senate Judiciary Committee is extreme. Can you imagine the uproar should ever the Republicans, say, block a vote on someone such as Ruth Bader Ginsburg? I thought the Democrats liked democracy. I guess I was wrong.

— John C. Kraft, Hartland, Wis.

Put issue in schools

Congratulations on the September issue. Each article of "What Makes America Strong" presented a clear perspective our students do not get in the often-sterile classes that address our constitution and government. Providing the issue to schools would be an excellent response to Gen. Richard B. Myers' view that the role of veterans' organizations should be to educate the general public.

— Thomas R. Collingwood, Richardson, Texas

Family forgotten

I am becoming more disillusioned with the Legion as time goes by. I thought you had all the makings of a good topic with "What Makes America Strong," but you didn't cover the most important aspect: the American family. The family is America's foundation. Everyone, including the people at the Legion, is forgetting this most important fact.

— James F. Vargo, Waterford, Pa.

Not to be forced

I had to read and reread "The Last Refuge of a Free People" (September). If Maj. Gen. Patrick H. Brady really believes patriotism must be forced on the citizenry, then the elite right is scarier than

the elite left. Societies that have forced patriotism on their people include the old U.S.S.R., Nazi Germany, fascist Italy and Japan. I hope the United States never joins such distinguished company. Being the "true patriot" Brady envies is not to be free or a patriot.

— Martin Lee, St. Louis Park, Minn.

The true elite

Maj. Gen. Patrick J. Brady's splendid article included the phrase "booted and spurred" to describe the so-called "elite." This is a disservice to a true patriot, Paul Revere, who was thus described in Longfellow's poem about his ride. These people aren't elite except in their own minds. The true elite are, to use Brady's words, "the uncommon common Americans," who understand what has made this country great and have fought to allow the "elite" the freedom to try to destroy it. A better term should be found for these anti-patriots. "Scum" comes to the mind of this World War II veteran.

— Lewis H. Hendrixson, Crofton, Md.

Not an empire

I have to object to Gary Geipel's characterization of America as an "empire" ("The American Empire," September). "Empire" is something we Americans have fought against, from our colonial revolution against the British to the Cold War against the "evil empire." That is why empires are generally understood to be bad things to Americans, and the term has a negative connotation. In this post-colonial age, citizens of most other nations would probably agree with me. Why portray America in a negative light?

— Frank Richards, Chevy Chase, Md.

We will win

I just finished reading the article "Duty, Honor, Country" in the September issue. Well done. Yes, together we will win this war on terrorism. My son serves in the Marine Corps and has made us proud. His entire family wishes him and his comrades well no matter what they do or where they go.

— Bob Schott, Cockeysville, Md.



*"The willingness
with which our
young people are
likely to serve in
any war, no
matter how
justified, shall be
directly
proportional to
how they perceive
the veterans of
earlier wars were
treated and
appreciated by
their nation."*

– George Washington

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This We Believe

A new generation of young Americans is once again deployed around the world, answering our nation's wartime call to arms. Like so many brave men and women who honorably served before them, these new veterans are fighting, to the death when necessary, for the freedom, liberty and security of all. Also, like those who fought before them, today's veterans deserve the due respect of a grateful nation when they come home.

Unfortunately, without urgent changes in health-care funding, our new veterans will soon discover their battles are not over. They will be forced to fight for the life of a health-care system that was designed specifically for their unique needs. Just as veterans of the 20th century did, they will be forced into a long-standing battle to fulfill America's promise to make that system accessible to all veterans.

United, the three largest veterans service organizations in the United States – The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Disabled American Veterans – believe no veteran should be forced to fight for the care he or she is entitled to receive.

We believe it is time to guarantee health-care funding for all veterans. We believe health-care rationing must end. We believe it is time the promise is kept.

Access to quality health care for veterans has been compromised in recent years by budget shortfalls, rising medical costs and dramatically increased demand. VA estimates there will be 4.9 million unique veteran patients in Fiscal Year 2003, a 31.5 percent increase from the 3.7 million projected only a year ago. Today, some 300,000 American veterans are waiting for appointments in VA facilities. Approximately half of those men and women will wait six months or longer for an appointment. VA must be adequately funded to meet its own growth and end these intolerable waiting periods.

We believe the current discretionary funding formula, in which VA must compete with other agencies for scarce budget dollars, must be replaced. Our organizations, with more than seven million members, strongly support passage of the bipartisan Veterans Health Care Funding Act of 2002, introduced as H.R. 5250 by House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Christopher H. Smith (R-N.J.) and Lane Evans (D-Ill.). The Senate version was introduced as S. 2903 by South Dakota Democrat Sen. Tim Johnson. Once signed into law, the act would affix VA health-care funding to the actual average cost of care for veterans enrolled in the system, with annual indexing for inflation. We believe the only way VA can fulfill its mission is to guarantee the funding it needs to operate.

The brave men and women who are currently deployed to far-off regions of the world must be assured the VA health-care system will be there for them when they come home. If we fail to deliver that promise, if we fail to give VA a fighting chance to fulfill its duty, what then is the new generation of veterans expected to believe?

Ronald F. Conley
National Commander
The American Legion

Ray C. Sisk
National Commander in Chief
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Edward R. Heath, Sr.
National Commander
Disabled American Veterans

Seven Million Man March

Veterans unite for a VA health-care system that works.

Hundreds of faces passed by me in 1965 while I was stationed on Guam, which served as a refueling stop for all forces – alive, wounded and dead – returning to the United States from the fighting in Vietnam. But one face in particular stood out. That was the face of a young soldier whose head had been sprayed with mortar fragments. He was going home. Doctors told him that within a year, he would be blind. I will never forget the look in those sad, damaged eyes when he turned to me and asked, “A year from now, who is going to take care of me?”

I have spent nearly 40 years in The American Legion trying to make sure there is a good answer to that question.

But right now – as more than 300,000 American veterans wait months for primary-care appointments in VA facilities across the country, as thousands of hospital beds lay empty because money has not been budgeted for adequate staffing, as teams of paper-pushers and bean-counters crisscross the VA health-care system looking for new ways to downsize, as veterans stand bewildered because the VA can't support itself by billing the Medicare we've all paid into – the young soldier's words keep rolling around in my head: “A year from now, who is going to take care of me?”

The Heart of the Problem. The current funding mechanism for veterans' health care does not work. It is a “discretionary” budget item, meaning spending levels can cycle up or down depending on the economy or who's running for office. A program the size of VA health care, with more than 4 million patients a year, cannot be funded according to the whims of Washington.

In 1996, Congress opened the door for all veterans to enroll in the VA system regardless of disability rating or financial status. It was to be a VA for all veterans, and we applauded that. Since then, however, the system has methodically grown

into one of the biggest un-funded mandates of our time.

As hundreds of thousands of veterans joined the system and were classified as “Category 7s” (financially stable with no service-connected disability), waiting rooms and appointment books filled beyond capacity. Adequate provisions were not made to pay for the growth. That is why we have the gross imbalance of empty hospital wings and overflowing waiting rooms. That is why thousands of appeals cases that could add new patients to the system are not being decided. That is why last summer a memo from top leadership went around to VA facilities asking them not to promote new enrollment.

There is no way around the fact that the VA health-care system must be fully funded to work. That funding must be guaranteed. A dollar amount, based on the real cost of care and annually indexed for inflation, must be appropriated for every veteran in the system. Otherwise, the access problems will grow so profound, the very existence of the VA health-care system will be jeopardized.

Again, the question from a young man whose duty to our country cost him his eyesight: “Who is going to take care of me?”

United for Change. This country's three largest veterans service organizations – The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Disabled American Veterans – have joined forces to support the bipartisan Veterans Health Care Funding Act of 2002. If passed, this legislation would mandate VA health-care funding on the basis of real cost per veteran.

Combine the membership of our three organizations, and you can call this a “Seven Million Man March.” Sick and tired of waiting in line for intolerably delayed appointments at under-staffed, under-funded VA facilities, we – the organized veterans of America – demand change.

We must do this now, because I guarantee that somewhere soon, somewhere in the world, a young, wounded man on his way home to a new and changed life is going to ask the same question I heard on Guam in 1965: “A year from now, who is going to take care of me?”

That man deserves an answer.



National
Commander
Ronald F. Conley
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There is no way around the fact that the VA health-care system must be fully funded to work. That funding must be guaranteed.



National-park snowmobile ban?

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Rep. Rush Holt
D-N.J.



More than 80 million Americans visit our national parks each year. More Americans visit our parks than go to all the Major League Baseball games, National Football League games and Disney theme parks combined. Of our 385 national parks, Yellowstone is the oldest and, in the view of many park

enthusiasts, the most glorious. Today, however, snowmobilers are threatening Yellowstone's future.

The air pollution caused by the 60,000 snowmobiles that enter the park each winter is greater than all that generated by the more than 3 million cars and other motorized vehicles that enter it each year. At the west entrance, the air pollution is so awful during the winter months that park rangers have resorted to wearing gas masks to avoid getting ill.

Pollution is so awful during the winter months that park rangers have resorted to wearing gas masks to avoid getting ill.

In January 2001, the National Park Service did the right thing. After carefully studying the science, examining the law and reviewing the comments of the American people, it determined that the use of snowmobiles was inconsistent with the mission of the National Park Service to leave parks "unimpaired." It implemented a rule to phase out snowmobile use in Yellowstone.

Under pressure from the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association, however, the Bush administration has since suspended the National Park Service's decision and has begun to roll it back.

There are thousands of miles of trails outside Yellowstone where snowmobilers can enjoy their fun without restriction. As a national park, however, Yellowstone is a special case and needs special protection. It is a living, breathing space of natural splendor set aside for the enjoyment of all Americans, not just for those who ride snowmobiles.

That is why I am sponsoring the "Yellowstone Protection Act," a bill with bipartisan support that would ban snowmobiles from Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. Congress made a promise to protect Yellowstone when it created the park in 1872. We in Congress now have a duty to fulfill it.

Rep. Bart Stupak
D-Mich.

OPPOSE



My congressional district, the 1st District of Michigan, is home to hundreds of miles of snowmobile trails. Venture into almost any small town in the region and you can see the economic importance of snowmobiling. From small cafes to motels to restaurants, the region depends on money spent by snowmobilers. This spending is particularly vital for Alger County, home of Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore.

Each year, this park lures 21,000 snowmobilers, who are drawn to the towering cliffs overlooking the shores of Lake Superior. Of particular interest is Miners Castle, which takes its name from the sandstone formation that juts into and above Lake Superior and closely resembles a castle – complete with towers and turrets. It leaves most visitors awestruck.

In the wake of a National Park Service announcement that snowmobiles would be banned from national parks, I fought to keep winter access to this site open. Pictured Rocks has co-existed harmoniously with its snowmobiling visitors for years, and the immediate area around the park has benefited immensely from this winter activity.

I have never argued for opening every corner of all national parks to snowmobiles. In the 27 park units affected by the ban there may be areas of special environmental concern where access by motorized vehicles should be limited. This does not mean, however, that entire park units should be off-limits.

The answer to the question of regulating snowmobile use in national parks lies in granting some local policy control to the local park authority. A broad national policy can then be tailored to individual parks, based on such factors as impact on the local economy and long-standing uses of some areas within each park.

Just as I have objected to across-the-board imposition of restrictions on vehicle use in our national forests, I also object to a blanket mandate from Washington banning snowmobiles. One size does not fit all in policy any more than it does in clothing.

YOUR OPINIONS COUNT

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*To provide every veteran his or her promised care,
VA must become a needs-driven health-care operation
and abandon its current budget-driven system.*

National Commander Ronald F. Conley,
in his testimony before Congress

Commander outlines *The American Legion's* vision for VA.

BY JAMES V. CARROLL

Thousands of veterans may die waiting for VA health care if new and innovative sources of income are not found, American Legion National Commander Ronald F. Conley told a joint session of House and Senate Veterans' Affairs committees on Capitol Hill in September.

"There are 7 million veterans either enrolled or waiting to enroll to make VA their primary health-care provider," Conley said. "But in order for the growing number of veterans to access VA health care, additional revenue streams must be generated to supplement – not offset – annual discretionary appropriations."

To provide every veteran his or her promised care, VA must become a needs-driven health-care operation and abandon its current budget-driven system, Conley said. He asked Congress to appropriate \$24.5 billion for VA in fiscal year 2004 and to permit eligible veterans to use their Medicare benefits to pay for VA treatment of nonservice-connected illnesses. He also asked Congress to appropriate \$1.3 billion for the Veterans Benefits Administration to shorten the time to process claims and adjudicate appeals.

"At a time when veteran numbers are on the increase, VA con-

tinues to downsize its medical staff and close beds and wards," Conley said. "It has ceased marketing activities and directed VA employees not to encourage potential Priority-7 veterans to enroll. This is not a proper solution to VA's problems. This is no way to treat those who defended our country. The way to provide the right care, in the right place, at the right time, is by providing additional staffing, additional services and additional funding.

"VA hospitals should be encouraged to bill and collect all copayments, deductibles and third-party reimbursements by allowing each of them to retain what has been collected and to apply that money toward operating expenses and expanded services. The money collected should be added to the VA budget, not offset."

VA also should be permitted to bill, collect and retain third-party reimbursements from Medicare on behalf of Medicare-eligible veterans, Conley said. "All veterans pay for Medicare their entire working lives. However, when they are most likely to need medical services from the hospital system designed for them, they must turn elsewhere because VA cannot bill Medicare," Conley said. "This is wrong, and it is something that Congress can and should correct. When it is corrected, not only will veterans receive care they can afford, but VA will also receive funding which it desperately needs to continue providing quality care to all our nation's veterans."

Funding VA for All Veterans.

"The American Legion believes VA should offer a defined health-benefit package, on a premium basis, for veterans who come to VA with no health insurance. This would benefit veterans, and it would certainly benefit VA," Conley said. "We firmly believe that making VA a Medicare provider and creating a premium-based VA benefit package will solve VA's backlog problem and enable VA to fulfill its mission to care for those who have borne the battle."

Today, more than 300,000 Priority-7 men and women who responded when their country called remain on waiting lists seeking help from VA. These men and women abandoned their peaceful lives and took up arms as required. They asked no questions but did as ordered, Conley said. America owes them more than waiting lines.

"History has shown that far too often after wars have been won, we

FACING PAGE: American Legion National Commander Ronald F. Conley delivered a serious message about VA health care during a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs committees.

James V. Carroll



National Commander Ronald F. Conley and Senate Majority Leader Thomas A. Daschle, D-S.D., exchange views during a meeting in Daschle's office.

James V. Carroll

tend to forget those who fought. We tend to forget that every victory has a price. That price is often paid – quietly and individually – without complaint by those who bore the brunt of battle.”

The Appeals Problem. The American Legion appreciates VA's pledge to speed up the claims and adjudication process, but the organization is deeply disturbed by a growing problem of backlogged appeals cases, Conley said.

“We applauded Secretary Anthony J. Principi's pledge to speed up the process, but we did not anticipate that the new focus on speed would greatly diminish the quality of the claims process,” Conley said. “One evil has been replaced by another. The backlog may have decreased, but the appellate workload has increased by 21,000 cases.”

The net result for the veteran is the same: no resolution, no benefits, no hope – another soldier ignored by the nation he or she served, Conley said. Despite all good intentions, he said, the system is failing.

Just imagine being sick, he said, being in pain every day, be-

ing despondent about the present and doubtful about the future and then having to wait – often for months, sometimes for years – to find out if the country you served will fulfill its obligation to you.

“Whenever VA denies a disabled veteran timely access to health care, VA is failing in its primary mission to put veterans first,” Conley said. “Whenever a veteran's claim is not handled in a timely and accurate manner, VA is not putting veterans first. And whenever a veteran is turned away because the only beds available are in abandoned wings that have been shut because of lack of money, VA is not putting veterans first.”

Other Priorities. Conley outlined to lawmakers The American Legion's concerns about homeless veterans and their families. VA estimates more than 340,000 veterans live on the streets of America today, a 34-percent increase from 1998.

“These men and women once proudly wore the uniforms of this nation's armed forces and they deserve our help,” Conley said. “Homelessness is a travesty, but homelessness among veterans is

disgraceful. The American Legion stands ready to work with Congress and VA to help find solutions to end this travesty.”

Among other proposals, Conley said Congress must address VA's shortage of nurses, specialty physicians and psychologists. He proposed that VA and the Department of Defense seek additional cost-sharing ventures. He said VA's Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services program must reflect the input of veterans' service organizations and not to undermine vital services under the guise of austerity. Congress must adequately fund community-based initiatives that assist homeless veterans as well as pass legislation mandating compensation and health care to Gulf War veterans who contract Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's disease, in the future. Congress must also fund VA's request for additional claims personnel to cut time for overall processing and appeals. □

James V. Carroll is an assistant editor for The American Legion Magazine.

Article design: Holly K. Soria

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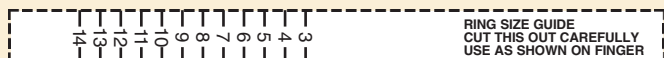
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No Average Education

Fed up with public education, more parents are homeschooling.

BY DAN ALLSUP

Calvin McCarter of Grand Rapids, Mich., placed first in the 2002 National Geographic Bee by identifying China as the location of the Lop Nur nuclear testing site – not bad for a 10-year-old, the youngest competitor in the contest. Even more remarkable is the fact that young Calvin, like 12 of the 55 finalists in the bee, never set foot in a traditional classroom.

More and more, homeschoolers are becoming the rule rather than the exception when it comes to winning national geography and spelling competitions. In 2001, eight homeschoolers advanced to the finals of the geography contest and four finished in the top 10. In 1997, Rebecca Sealfon, 13, started a trend when she grabbed top honors in the Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee. Since then, two other homeschool students have won the title, and in 2000, homeschoolers took the top three spots. Homeschooler George Thampy of Maryland Heights, Mo., won the spelling bee in 2000, then capped off the year by finishing second in the National Geographic Bee.

What's going on? Why is "Focus on the Family" founder Dr. James Dobson encouraging Christian parents to pull their children out of California public schools and teach them at home? Even former U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett has suggested subcontracting public education to homeschoolers.

Are these kids getting a better

education from Mom and Dad?

"Yes, we do see a number of homeschoolers winning the spelling and geography bees," says Rosella Wamser, regional superintendent of schools in St. Clair County, Ill. "But I'm not sure you can take the leap to say that all homeschooled kids are the cream of the crop. I don't think they represent all homeschoolers."

That doesn't explain, however, why kids studying at home outscore their peers in national assessment tests like the ACT and SAT. (The average SAT score for the general population in 2000 was 1019, while homeschoolers averaged 1100.) In a 1998 study by Dr. Lawrence Rudner of the University of Maryland, 20,000 homeschooled children took standardized tests. Rudner concluded that in every subject and at every grade level, homeschooled students scored significantly higher than their public- and private-school counterparts. In that study, homeschooled children had average scores that fell between the 82nd and 92nd percentile in reading and the 85th percentile in math. Rudner concluded that by the time homeschooled students reach the eighth grade, they typically perform four grade levels above the national average.

An American Tradition? Homeschooling isn't new; most children were educated at home in colonial America. Abraham Lincoln and George Washington Carver were homeschooled. Mandatory attendance laws in the early 20th cen-

tury moved more children into the public schools, however. Many states even outlawed homeschooling until the 1980s, when a number of Christian parents began homeschooling their children.

The number of students taught at kitchen tables instead of public schools is rising. The Department of Education estimates that about 50,000 students were homeschooled in 1984; by 1988 that number increased to about 300,000. Legal in all 50 states since 1993, about 2 million children are now taught at home. That number has been increasing by about 15 percent each year since then.

School violence and the perceived poor quality of public education are among reasons parents elect to teach their children at home, but religion may be the most common. Many parents feel public schools just aren't up to teaching their children ethics and morality.

Michael and Debbie Kenney of Maplewood, Mo., have 10 children, ranging in age from eight months to 21 years. They have and plan to continue to homeschool all of them. "I think that public education is inferior," Debbie says. "They've kicked out the prayers and now they're trying to kick out the Pledge of Allegiance. My husband and I want to impart our children with the values that we see as important. We need to teach them these values because the public schools can't."

Many critics of homeschooling cite a lack of socialization as a major problem. Being stuck at

home with Mom all day will hamper a child's maturation process and stifle social skills, they say. Some charge that homeschoolers are not learning how to live in the real world.

Superintendent Rosella Wamser of Belleville, Ill., concurs. "I believe homeschooled kids have a very restricted view of the world," she says. "They have very little interaction with other kids, religions or races. In today's world, we have to have a wide variety of social interaction, and homeschooled kids aren't getting that. I also think it is good for children to be in contact with adults (other than their parents). They need diversity."

Michael Smith of Purcellville, Va., president of the Homeschool Legal Defense Association, doesn't think homeschooled kids are missing out. "Many homeschooled kids and their parents tend to be very active in their community, their churches and scouting groups," he says. "Homeschoolers are actively recruited by colleges and employers because they *are* so socialized and well-rounded."

An Air Force veteran, Smith

Homeschooling isn't new; most children were educated at home in colonial America.

Abraham Lincoln and George Washington Carver were homeschooled.

also pointed out that about 10 percent of military families home-school their children. "Moving every two years can be very disruptive to children," he said. "Homeschooling gives these families continuity."

Most homeschoolers aren't raised in isolation. Support groups are springing up around the country to ensure homeschooled children have active and diverse social lives. In many areas, they've formed bowling leagues, choirs and a variety of clubs. One such group of 40 families in St. Louis arranges regular

"Mom-sponsored" picnics, field trips and dances. Members represent a variety of races and religions, and parents in the group run the gamut – from auto mechanic to nuclear engineer.

A study by psychologist Larry Shyers determined that home-educated children have significantly lower "problem-behavior" scores than do their conventionally educated counterparts. Shyers' findings also hint that this may be because their primary behavior role models are their parents, not their classmates.

Molly McCann, a 13-year-old homeschooler from Chesterfield, Mo., scoffs at the socialization argument. "What am I really missing except for bad language, drugs and violence?" she asks. "Besides, with five brothers and sisters at home, I get all the socialization I can handle."

Molly's mother, Noreen, explains why she and her husband, Kevin, decided to teach their children at home. "I knew about the problems with public schools. I want my kids to read and write, and the schools don't even teach

phonics anymore," she said. "But the real reason we decided to homeschool was because we wanted to enjoy the family experience. I don't want to feed the kids every morning, and then push them out the door only to see them come home at the end of the day tired and crabby. One of the best things about homeschooling is seeing our kids interact with each other. I can see how close they are, how much they enjoy being with each other and how much I enjoy being with them."

"Homeschooling can be difficult, and it's not for everyone," she continues. "But when the day goes really well, it's a slice of heaven. I think it's family life at its best." □

Dan Allsup is a St. Louis-area freelance writer.

Article design: Doug Rollison



Host Alex Trebek looks on as National Geographic Bee winner Calvin McCarter, 10, right, shakes hands with second-place finisher Matthew Russell, 14, at the National Geographic Society Headquarters in Washington. McCarter is homeschooled. **AP**

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State's positions on homeschooling vary

Laws regarding homeschooling vary from state to state. Illinois, for example, places few restrictions on parents, not even requiring them to inform their school districts. Other states require that parents pass certification tests and that their children be tested by "a qualified neutral person."

Not surprisingly, California may lead the nation in pressuring parents to educate their children in the public-school system. As recently as the early 1980s, Californians supported private homeschooling, but the state board of education changed its position about 10 years ago. California parents wishing to teach their children at home now must be certified by the state and have the proper credentials to qualify for a private-school exemption. Without these credentials, local school districts consider homeschooled children truant.

Delaine Eastin, California's su-

perintendent of public instruction, announced that she was concerned about the "thousands of homeschooled children in California whose education is not subject to supervision." In August, she sent a letter to legislators asking them to tighten controls on homeschooling because "California's children deserve no less."

Michael Smith of the Home-school Legal Defense Association responded in a *Washington Times* opinion piece: "The bottom line is whether the state will trust homeschooling parents to teach their children to be worthwhile people and productive citizens," he wrote. "Homeschooling parents have proven their reliability. If the legislators can be neutral and not be influenced by the powerful lobby of the National Education Association and the public education establishment, they'll come to that conclusion."

What about parents who can't

be trusted to properly teach their children? What do we do when supposedly homeschooled kids are actually working on the family farm? Isn't it the government's job to ensure our children receive an education?

No, says Tom Washburn of the National Center for Home Education. "There is a myth that accountability only comes from the government," he says. "That's not true. When it comes to education, the parent is accountable and responsible – not the government."

Smith agrees. "We live in a free society and there will be failures," he admits. "There is no perfect solution. Obviously, there are also failures in the public schools. There are laws that our children receive an appropriate education, so don't coddle the parents who refuse to teach their children. Prosecute them."

– Dan Allsup




Andrew Odor, 13, works on math problems while his brother, Jarred, 11, gets help from their mother, Karen, in Groton, Conn. Karen is a coordinator for CHOOSE CT, a group of about 40 homeschooling families from 19 churches in southeastern Connecticut. **AP**



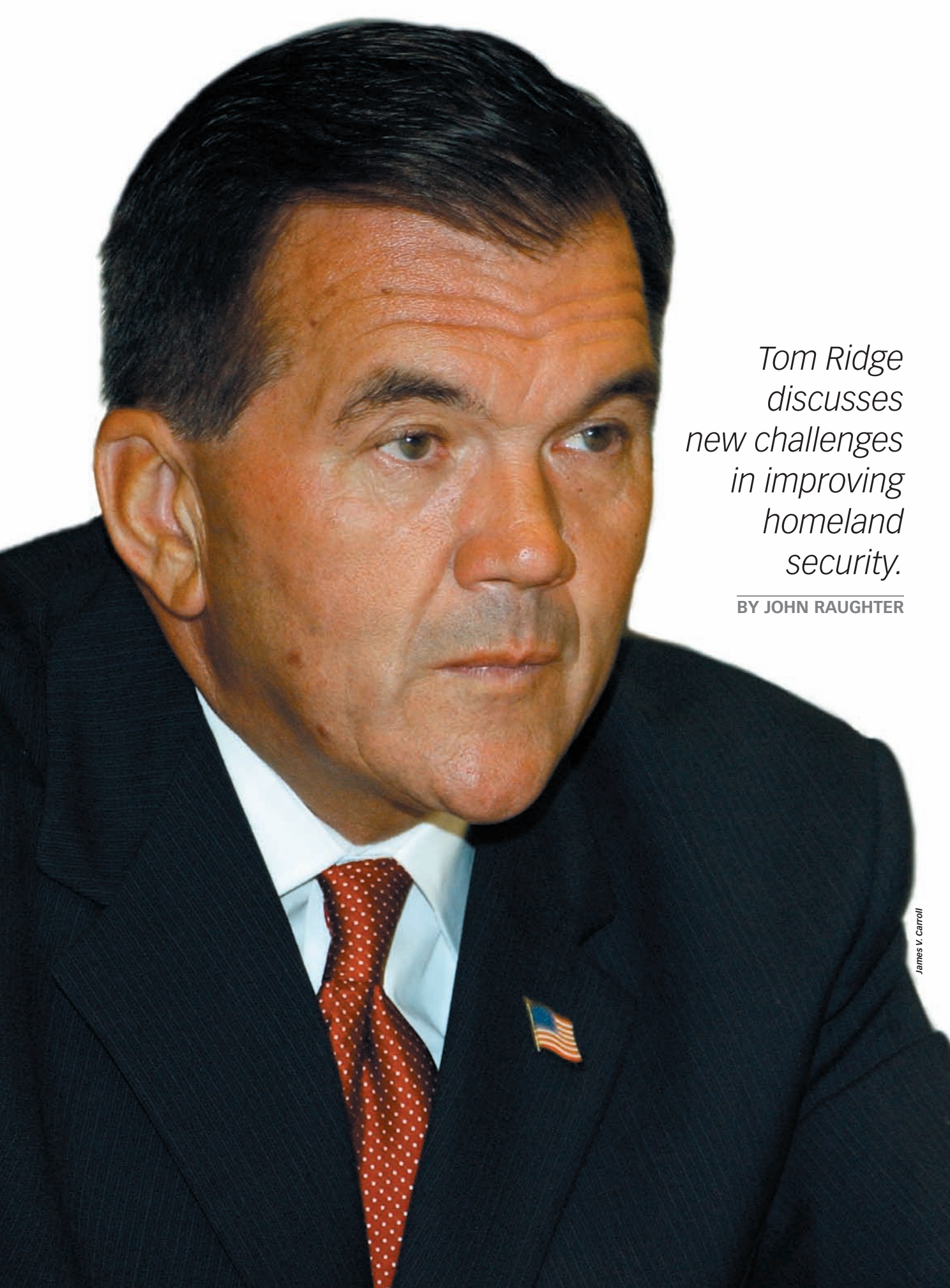
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*Tom Ridge
discusses
new challenges
in improving
homeland
security.*

BY JOHN RAUGHTER

'Share the Information'

Tom Ridge was sworn in as the first Office of Homeland Security adviser on Oct. 8, 2001. The two-term governor of Pennsylvania also was the first enlisted Vietnam combat veteran elected to the House of Representatives. He was re-elected six times. A member of American Legion Post 773 in Erie, Pa., Ridge was interviewed at the Legion's 84th National Convention in Charlotte, N.C.

The American Legion Magazine: What role can The American Legion play in improving homeland security?

Tom Ridge: Since 1919, your organization has been involved in service to country and community. I think there are ways to involve the Legion in terms of supporting USA Freedom Corps and the Citizen Corps – particularly the Citizen Corps – where we have citizens at the local level involved in supporting local law enforcement, emergency planning and preparation, providing special skills to respond to mobilization efforts. So I think that as we develop the president's national strategy on homeland security and engage the country, there will be many ways this organization and its members can support that effort. Those who want to

help should visit our Web site, www.citizencorps.org.

TALM: How do you change the Washington culture of federal agencies failing to communicate with each other?

TR: Your question highlights a challenge that the president and our office has with regard to bringing together well-intentioned people and organizations who have been doing things their way, many times their exclusive way, for years or decades. I am now a personal witness to an intelligence-gathering or an intelligence-sharing within the CIA, the FBI and other agencies at the highest level. The challenge is to make sure that (sharing) is institutionalized not only among the principals, George Tenet (CIA director) and Bob Mueller (FBI director), but also make sure that everybody at all levels is sharing that information. Information is the key, and the sharing of information is probably the most vital component of the national strategy to enhance homeland security. It's sharing within the federal government but also with the states and local governments and also gaining information from the states and locals up to the federal government. We made great progress, but there is still significant progress that needs to occur. We're going to get governors cleared so we can, on a selected basis, share information within statewide homeland security advisers. Other people outside the federal govern-

ment, on a need-to-know basis, should have access to some of the information they have in Washington. So we are working on that, with tremendous support from the governors and from the elected officials from around the country. But you highlighted a critical effort. Secure the information. Share the information – information at the airports, information at the borders, information about terrorist activity, information about individuals, information about surveillance. There's a lot of it out there. We just need to do a better job of fusing it together, drawing conclusions and then sharing it.

"Information is the key, and the sharing of information is probably the most vital component of the national strategy to enhance homeland security."

TALM: Do you see a problem with leaks as you share this information?

TR: America has not learned to digest and use this information in a confidential manner. There are occasions when we get information that we want to share with one of the many joint terrorism task forces around this country. It is submitted to these task forces because they have federal, state and local law enforcement involvement. It's shared within because they need to know what we know.

From time to time it seeps into the public domain and people interpret it in a way that suggests there is a new threat. The fact is

that we are under an elevated level of threat right now. We don't share that information under the Threat Advisory System because we think the folks in that region need to know that this is what we're picking up. It doesn't mean that an attack is imminent. Rarely are we going to have the information that (provides) time, place, manner, means, but when we get some general information targeted at a particular community – sometimes even before we determine it's credible – we like to share it. And we still have to learn how to digest that information and use it appropriately. We've made great progress since Sept. 11, but we still have a lot of work to do.

"If we didn't think that the threat of international terrorism would be sustained through the next years, decades, perhaps even permanently, then the president wouldn't be asking Congress to permanently reorganize these departments and agencies."

TALM: Is another terrorist strike against the United States inevitable?

TR: Given the venom, evil and hatred that al-Qaida has directed toward this country and the fact that they have literally trained thousands, and that we remain their primary target... we believe that another attack of some form is inevitable. It's not a matter of if, but a matter of when. If we didn't think we had an enduring vulnerability, if we didn't think that the threat of international terrorism would be sustained through the next years, decades, perhaps even permanently, then the president wouldn't be asking Congress to permanently reorganize these departments and agencies. We prepare for all eventualities. I think we have to, be it chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear. But as you prepare to respond to a threat, you have to deal with consequences. There are a lot of concerns that we

would have because of high consequences but, based on what we know, would be of low probability. I think, by and large, we take the mindset to prepare for the range of attacks that are possible.

TALM: Considering that most of the Sept. 11 hijackers were Saudis, does it make sense for airport security workers to spend as much time screening Florida grandmothers as young Middle Eastern males?

TR: The president, Congress and the American public know how critically important it is for us to provide the best security and safety to the aviation public. We know that is a No. 1 priority. We also know that we need to do a better

job at our airports distinguishing between those men and women – boys and girls, I mean that's how extreme it has become – who are of no risk and those who might be a potential risk. What Secretary of Transportation (Norman) Mineta is doing and what Transportation Security Administration head Jim Loy is

doing is working toward a risk-management approach so that not everybody will be treated the same because not everybody *should* be treated the same. I think we're going to see progress in this area accelerate. We are working very hard with the TSA and the aviation industry to come up with some sort of trusted-traveler program or some means by which passengers share information with the airlines and the security folks, information from which reasonable people can conclude that the likelihood of this person or these people being terrorists is remote, if nonexistent. We ought to treat those people differently. They ought not be subjected to a random search. We might want to treat your baggage differently. So if we distinguish between people who are low- or no-risk because we know something about them, then we can focus the human resources and technology on people who we think are either

high-risk or that we don't know anything about. That is still a work in progress. It's still a source of aggravation and frustration for the traveling public, and we know that we have to do a better job at the airport. I've been searched. My son has been searched – he's 15, and it's OK, but the fact of the matter is you have finite people, finite resources. Shouldn't you target them? We need to do a better job of targeting.

TALM: Since veterans are experienced at providing security, do you see the veterans preference program continuing as you fill positions in the Department of Homeland Security?

TR: Absolutely. The president has virtually guaranteed that. There has been a lot of misinformation about the protections that would follow either present employees or future employees who are hired by the department, and the president feels very, very strongly that veterans preference remains with those who have it and to those who might use it in the event of being hired by the new department.

TALM: How do you feel about The American Legion family's response to the war and creation of the Department of Homeland Security?

TR: I would like to thank The American Legion and Auxiliary members for their extraordinary support of the president and the troops abroad who have engaged the enemy in Afghanistan and around the world. It's important again to note their support for the administration's efforts and in the area of retaining the notion that we can refer to God in the Pledge of Allegiance and thank them for their continuing advocacy on behalf of our fellow veterans and thank them for the support that has been forthcoming not only to my office, but the new Department of Homeland Security as well. I'm proud to be a member of The American Legion. □

John Raughter is editor of The American Legion Magazine.

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The Metamorphosis of Organized Crime

BY ROBERT MCGARVEY

When the reputed boss of all crime bosses, John Gotti, died of cancer and was laid to rest in Queens, N.Y., last June, a collective sigh of relief was breathed. To many, Gotti's death and the collapse of several Mafia under bosses in recent years symbolized the demise of organized crime. There was just one problem. The demise did not really occur. Although perhaps set back by the death of its most definitive modern antagonist, organized crime is not only alive and kicking in America, it has mutated into a form that law enforcement has yet to fully grasp.

"There's plenty of organized crime activities today," says Fred Martens, former head of the Pennsylvania Crime Commission. "Law enforcement shouldn't get too carried away celebrating its defeat of the mob. Organized crime may even be more dangerous now."

Gotti's Mafia – otherwise known as La Cosa Nostra (LCN) or simply "the mob" – is not, and probably never was, the only heavyweight crime syndicate operating in the United States. But today, much like terrorism, organized crime has assumed a multi-farious global presence that stretches from Mexico to China, Israel to Russia and southern California to New York City. The new criminal organizations are fueled by illegal activities that include new twists on drug trafficking and prostitution along with old standbys like cigarette smuggling and political corruption. Any mo-

Stone

From trigger-happy biker gangs to cigarette-smuggling terrorists, new global villains complicate an evolving underworld.



John Gotti may be dead, but his mob still rules much of the underworld. Corbis

mentum Gotti's mob might have lost in recent years has been snatched up by other menaces, happy to fill whatever underworld niches are available to them. Among these opportunistic new players in organized crime are the very terrorist elements against whom our nation has declared war. It has become, as Martens explains, a "mosaic that has gotten lots more colorful ... The mosaic is very different from what it was 25 years ago, but nobody can say we don't have organized crime today."

"The face of organized crime is changing, but there still are many active crime groups," says Steve Brodt, a professor of criminal justice at Ball State University in Indiana. The shuffling deck of who's who in crime complicates matters for law enforcement, Brodt says. "There are new groups to become expert in, new cultures to understand, new languages to learn. That's made it tougher."

Experts cannot agree about who is on top of the underworld these days. Ask 10 different criminologists, and prepare for 10 different answers. How they rank may be a puzzle, but crime-watchers generally agree that a handful of groups merit especially close watching.

Dirty Colors. It was 2:15 a.m. last April in the booming resort town of Laughlin, Nev., when gunshots ripped through Harrah's Casino. The Hells Angels and the Mongols of southern California were at each other's throats. When the brawl ended, three lay dead, 11 were hospitalized, and about 100

"The mosaic is very different from what it was 25 years ago, but nobody can say we don't have organized crime today."

– Fred Martens,
former head of the
Pennsylvania Crime Commission

thugs were handcuffed and detained for questioning.

Law enforcement pegs the number of Hells Angels at upwards of 2,000. About the same number belong to archrival Banditos. Smaller groups like the Mongols, the Pagans and the Vagos add a few thousand more to the nation's population of organized biker bad guys.

Today's motorcycle gangsters are powerful forces in manufacturing and distribution of methamphetamine, the highly addictive, laboratory-concocted form of speed that has plagued the drug world in recent years. As gangs from Nevada to New Jersey jockey for meth distribution territory, law enforcement braces for violent times ahead.

The Agony of Ecstasy. Every day at U.S. airports, tens of thousands of Ecstasy pills – the trendy, hallucinogenic drug wildly popular with young adults – are smuggled through customs. An estimated 2 million pills a week slip through increasingly sophisticated U.S.

Customs anti-Ecstasy nets. It is a slick, multi-faceted smuggling operation that has recruited thousands of middle-aged Europeans to haul loads of 10,000 to 20,000 pills at a time (amounts easily concealed on an individual). The smugglers are reportedly paid about \$10,000 – plus a free U.S. vacation – and they are falsely told the penalties for getting caught are minor, even though possession of as few as 500 pills can render prison sentences of 20 years.

Who runs this wildly profitable operation, in which one Ecstasy pill that costs a dime to produce can sell for \$50 on the street?

Israeli racketeers, say law enforcers. Almost all of the globe's Ecstasy production is believed to occur in the Netherlands and, from there, Israeli mob bosses direct smugglers known as "mules" to supply a growing market of young Americans. Ecstasy trafficking is so profitable that onetime Mafia under-boss Sammy "the Bull" Gravano – whose testimony put Gotti behind bars – himself worked as a distributor for the Israelis. Based in Phoenix, Gravano oversaw distribution of as many as 30,000 pills a week. Gravano is now in prison, but Israeli-run Ecstasy rings continue to flood the country with dope and all the ancillary crimes that come with it.

From Russia With Love. New York City's Times Square has always maintained a bold reputation for its place in the American sex industry, but an unlikely group has recently assumed a



Hells Angels and other motorcycle gangs have muscled into the meth trade. **AP**



Israeli racketeers are pegged with running the world's Ecstasy trade. **Corbis**



Russian prostitutes have poured into New York's sex industry. **Corbis**

stranglehold on the sleazy night clubs, peep shows and women who work the streets. The Russian Mafia – a hybrid of crooked ex-KGB special agents and criminals tough enough to survive the former Soviet Union’s notorious gulags – runs the show by bringing in a steady supply of duped young women from the streets of Russia, Ukraine and the Czech Republic. Tantalized by promises of American wages and glamorous jobs, the girls need little convincing to emigrate to the United States. Once here, they are threatened and beaten to keep them showing up for work. In other big cities – particularly Los Angeles and Miami – Russians exert similar muscle. Big money is involved. In its voluminous “International Crime Threat Assessment,” the U.S. government says 700,000 women and children were transported across international borders for purposes of sexual exploitation in 1997 alone. These activities generate an estimated \$4 billion a year. The Russians are scooping up ever-growing shares of that money.

However, as nasty as the Hells Angels, the Russian sex peddlers and Israeli drug traffickers are – brace yourself for a surprise – they still play second fiddle to Gotti’s LCN, says Jim Finkenaur, a former Department of Justice employee and now a professor of criminology at Rutgers University in New Jersey. “The Mafia isn’t dead,” he says. “It is wounded, but it hasn’t died.”

Lee Segem, a spokesperson for the New Jersey State Commission for Investigation, which is charged with tracking organized crime, says much the same. “The

LCN is in disarray. It has suffered immensely in the last 10 years as federal prosecutions have put many leaders in jail. But it is still a major factor.”

The fact is, increasingly potent as Russian, Israeli and motorcycle gangsters are, none are ready to supplant the Mafia. Russian organized crime, for instance, may be a misnomer. James Calder, an associate dean of the College of Public Policy at the University of Texas-San Antonio, says Russian gangsters operating in America are more opportunistic than rigorously organized. “Russian groups are not cohesive,” he says. “There are no bosses.” Much the same can be said about the Israelis, who are focused on little more than the Ecstasy racket.

Motorcycle gangs, meanwhile, “are a big-time worry,” says Mike Lytle, a senior research associate with the Arlington, Va., think tank Scientific Applications International. But criminal bikers put forth more energy fighting each other over turf than they do pursuing profitable underground enterprises.

Also dangerous but no real threat to the mob as yet are the Chinese Triads, descendants of centuries-old secret societies who enjoy sizable income from smuggling Chinese immigrants into the United States. Also, the Triads are major players in heroin trafficking out of southeast Asia’s Golden Triangle. A decade ago, criminologists frequently pegged the Triads as future heavyweights in U.S. organized crime, but that hasn’t happened yet. Chinese gangsters have found it very hard to move out of Chinatowns, Finkenaur says. “Their operations tend to be very localized.” That same insu-

larity, he adds, keeps American law enforcement from developing reliable Chinese informants.

Another group that warrants attention is the “Mexican Mafia.” This formidable ring that operates in Mexico and the United States controls much of the country’s cocaine and heroin traffic along with perhaps 70 percent of methamphetamine production, according to estimates by the State of California. “They have not ventured beyond drugs,” Finkenaur says. “They lack sophistication.” And they are not likely successors to the mob’s throne in America.

Down But Not Out. The old mob remains Numero Uno in America, on a number of different fronts, including:

■ **Political Corruption.** In Camden, N.J., Mayor Milton Milan was recently convicted of taking payoffs from the Mafia. A key prosecution witness was Philadelphia Mafia boss Ralph Natale, who testified that \$30,000 to \$50,000 lined Milan’s pockets to induce him to award city contracts to mob-affiliated businesses. The Philadelphia Mob may be near death after Natale – the highest ranking mob turncoat ever – testified against his own under-boss and more than 10 others, but the Mafia still is obviously capable of large-scale political corruption. No rival crime group has demonstrated such effective bribery of public officials.

■ **Pump and Dump.** The mob has sniffed out barrels of money that daily trade on legal stock markets and, increasingly, it is claiming a share. In so-called “pump-and-dump” operations, mob-influenced



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brokerages tout marginal stock via high-pressure, boiler rooms, and when artificial demand pushes share prices to a certain level, the mobsters cash in their holdings, take their profits and move onto the next scam. Those left holding that abandoned stock often find their shares are worthless. In one south Florida raid – where 89 indictments were handed out – two of the accused were known associates of the Columbo Mafia family, whose victims were allegedly bilked out of \$100 million. In another raid, prosecutors in New York swept up numerous racketeers tied to the Gambino family. Other stock-manipulation indictments have implicated members of the Bonnano family and the DeCalvacantes (the New Jersey-based Mafia, usually believed to be the loose model for “The Sopranos”). Bottom line: the mob has smelled the easy money that can be earned when Wall Street is rigged, and it has the sophistication to work the opportunity.

Going Legit. “The Mafia has become much more tightly integrated with law-abiding society,” says Gary Potter, a professor of criminal justice at Eastern Kentucky University. “They own many legitimate businesses.” In construction, check-cashing stores, bars and restaurants – at least in some parts of the country – significant organized-crime dollars are involved, and mob bosses act as behind-the-scenes partners. These businesses often are fronts for laundering illicit profits. No other crime group has achieved such penetration into honest U.S. society.

Still, today’s Mafia is not what it used to be. Its influence is highly regionalized with potency highest in greater New York, Chicago and Rhode Island. Membership is dwindling. But it would be a mistake for anyone to discount the Mafia, says Allan May, a researcher with AmericanMafia.com. “They are still the pre-eminent organized crime group. It’s not as powerful as it was, but no group is more powerful.”

What will it take to finally put the mob and its upstart rival or-

“There is growing overlap between organized crime and terrorist groups.”

– Mike Lytle,
Scientific Applications International

ganizations to sleep?

For starters, such a goal may not even be realistic. “Can we eliminate organized crime? No,” says G. Robert Blakey, a Notre Dame law professor who is widely credited as the prime author of the federal RICO statutes – or racketeering laws – that criminalized being any part of an organized crime enterprise. The laws enabled prosecutors to pursue entire organizations, from the boss down, and have been given credit for dramatically weakening groups ranging from mob families to the Mexican Mafia. Even so, Blakey does not envision a world without organized crime. “I don’t think we will ever eliminate it, but we can curtail it, and that has happened with RICO.”

Adds the Rev. Robert Mahoney, a sociology professor at Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Mo., “There is no such thing as eliminating organized crime. It provides too many services that people in fact want, such as narcotics. That means it is here to stay. So for society, the goal becomes managing it.”

The Terror Factor. While major progress has been made on the organized-crime front in recent years, some experts now worry that the nation’s shift in focus from mobsters to terrorists creates a window of opportunity. “A lot of resources are being shifted to terrorism,” Martens says. “This will give organized crime an ability to regroup, take new markets and operate with less government interference than they have faced in 20 years.”

“At all levels there has been a shift of resources away from investigating organized crime and into terrorism,” Segem says.

Adding to the worries is the notion of partnership between organized crime and terrorism, which share much in the way of definition. “There is growing overlap between organized crime and terrorist groups,” says Lytle of Scientific Applications International. Case in point: cigarette smuggling, an area Lytle pinpoints as a “New Prohibition” for criminals. “This will be a major source of income for organized crime,” he says. Price disparities from state to state due to varying tax burdens will drive that. In Virginia, where the state tax is a nominal few cents per pack, a carton of cigarettes costs under \$35. In New York City, that same carton costs \$70. The potential for huge profits has attracted growing numbers of criminals. “Highways will be clogged with trucks carrying illegal cigarettes,” Mahoney says.

Last summer, two brothers in North Carolina – Mohamad and Chawki Hammoud – were convicted of helping run a cigarette-smuggling ring that shipped smokes from low-tax North Carolina to higher-tax Michigan and funneled profits to Middle East militants in Hezbollah. Investigators also have been tracking other criminal activities – such as rigged lotteries and loan-sharking – where Islamic militants may be working hand in hand with organized crime.

That may be where the circle once again closes for organized crime. Resources may have shifted toward terrorist hunting, says Finkenaur, but as terrorist interests overlap with organized crime, prosecutors will pursue organized crime with renewed vigor. “That’s what I am seeing,” Finkenaur says.

New Jersey’s Segem agrees. “There’s a point where investigations into terrorist organizations and organized crime will merge. Particularly where terrorism and organized crime overlap, we will see energetic law enforcement and prosecution.” □

Robert McGarvey is a freelance writer who lives in Arizona.

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Prelude to Pearl Harbor

Tiny Hawaiian island holds fast-fading secrets of pre-World War II intelligence.

BY MARGARET A. HAAPOJA

A rusted old Cletrac bulldozer occupies a mysterious place of historical significance alongside a road on Ni'ihau, the tiny, remote Hawaiian island that has been in private ownership since 1864. Not far from the heavy implement are scant remains of a Japanese Zero that crash-landed after Pearl Harbor was attacked Dec. 7, 1941, on what is known as Hawaii's "Forbidden Island." The bulldozer, the crash site and the island's uniquely textured landscape are connected by a little-known story of U.S. military preparedness in the years leading up to World War II.

Arid but dotted with seasonal freshwater lakes, Ni'ihau is widely considered the most traditional and pristine of the Hawaiian islands. Unlike other islands in the state, Ni'ihau's official language is native

Hawaiian, even in the schools. Nearly all the 250 residents formerly raised crops, livestock and honey for the Robinson family business enterprises.

For generations, the family has held a tight rein on tourism and in doing so has effectively preserved much of the native culture and landscape. So insular was the island in the years before World War II that if an emergency were to occur on Ni'ihau, natives would light bonfires on the cliffs of the eastern shore to summon boats from Pakala, Kauai, about 25 miles away.

In 1933, a U.S. Army Air Corps major warned Lester and Aylmer Robinson, father and uncle to the island's current generation of owners, that Japan planned to mount a Sunday surprise attack on

Mere days after the Pearl Harbor attack, a U.S. PBY reportedly attacked a Japanese submarine and then crashed just beyond the Lehua Channel, shown here, which separates Ni'ihau Island and Lehua Island, in the distance. *Margaret Haapoja*

U.S. naval interests in Hawaii to initiate a war. The major also said if Japan's plans were successful, Ni'ihau would be seized. He asked the Robinson brothers to plow furrows all over the island's flat surface so no planes could land there. "For the next eight years, our family secretly plowed the whole place up at our own expense," said Keith Robinson, who today shares ownership of the island with his brother, Bruce. "First they used a team of draft mules. Then, in 1937, as a result of the USS *Panay* incident when the Japanese bombed the U.S. gunboat on the Yangtze River

in China, the family realized things were heating up between the United States and Japan. At that point, they purchased the (Cle-

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trac) and completed the plowing in the summer of 1941, about six months before the Pearl Harbor attack. It was a fantastic series of deep furrows all over the island. I've calculated there were somewhere between 2,500 and 5,000 miles of furrows."

An avid history buff with an encyclopedic knowledge of World War II, Robinson speculates that the U.S. Navy also was aware a Japanese surprise attack was imminent. He bases that surmise on exercises known as "Fleet Problem 19" conducted in the years before Pearl Harbor. According to the Navy's "Brief History of Aircraft Carriers," the USS *Saratoga* sailed from San Diego on March 15, 1938, for Hawaii. During the second phase of the exercise, *Saratoga* simulated a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor from a point 100 miles off Oahu, setting a pattern the Japanese would later copy.

Robinson, who served in the military between 1965 and 1969, always suspected the Japanese had stationed a lifeguard submarine off the coast of Ni'ihau to rescue downed aviators. His conjecture was reinforced when he became reacquainted with the Rev. Paul Denise in 1978. Pastor of a church in Waimea, Kauai, during World War II, Denise met Mitsuo Fuchida, the Japanese commander who led the air attack on Pearl Harbor and later became a Christian minister, at an ecumenical conference after the war. As the two were swapping war stories, Fuchida told Denise that Japanese aviators had been advised to land on Ni'ihau if they could not return to their aircraft carriers. According to a rare Japanese submarine book published by the IJN Submarine Historical Society, Japanese submarine I-174 was indeed assigned to rescue aviators from Ni'ihau during the period of Dec. 7 to 17, 1941.

The fact that one Japanese pilot crash-landed on Ni'ihau shortly after the Pearl Harbor attack also seems to confirm Fuchida's story.

Milimili Niheu, who grew up on Ni'ihau where his parents



The Robinson brothers used a Cletrac bulldozer to plow deep furrows across Ni'ihau. The tractor now rusts at the side of the road at Kiekie. *Margaret Haapoja*

worked for the Robinson family, vividly remembers the crash landing. He was 15, attending church in the village of Pu'uwai. "The plane flew really close overhead but was forced to land further away because of the kiawe trees," he says. "A few days later, my grandfather was captured by the pilot and held prisoner in a warehouse at Kiekie. He escaped by jumping out the window and sought refuge in the mountains with the rest of the villagers."

Eventually, Ni'ihau residents Benny Kanahale and his wife killed the Japanese pilot in self-defense, Niheu says.

Denise said he sailed on a commandeered sampan to Ni'ihau with Aylmer Robinson under the protection of an amphibious (PBY) patrol bomber in the days following the Japanese aviator's death. The sampan had just cleared the Lehua Channel and was starting down the west side of the island, according to Denise and other observers on Ni'ihau, when the PBY attacked a Japanese submarine and then crashed.

That recollection is corroborated by an accident report in the archives of the PBY Catalina Foundation, regarding a PBY-5 that crashed west of Ni'ihau

around 8:55 a.m. on Dec. 16, 1941.

The surviving crew reached the beach in the plane's rubber boat, but pilots Thomas Reynolds and James Marshall were never recovered. On Dec. 17, two PBYs from Pearl Harbor investigated the crash and brought back six survivors who reported the plane hit a severe bump off the leeward side of the island, stalled and spun in. All six survivors were committed to the Naval Hospital at Pearl Harbor. The report, however, lists the crash as operational probably due to clear air turbulence or wind shear. So the mystery remains about the sub's presence and Japan's plans to use the island as an emergency landing pad.

Grass now carpets the deep furrows on Ni'ihau. They

blend into the green landscape but still can be seen from the air. Residents still tend cattle and string shell leis. Some guide wild-game trophy hunts on the island, where tourism is now permitted in small doses. Others are employed by the Robinsons' Ni'ihau Ranch in contract maintenance work for small Navy installations on the island. Since that uniformed visitor came to Ni'ihau to warn of a possible Japanese attack eight years before it happened, the island has continued to serve as a small but strategic military site, in coordination with the Robinsons and the native islanders.

"The long and quiet tradition of collaborating with the U.S. military that began back in 1933 continued through the Cold War and the Space Age down to the present," Keith Robinson says. "There's more involvement with the military now than there ever was. We're one of the few places where they get pretty ready cooperation. Naval research and training is where Ni'ihau fits in these days, and as far as we're concerned, they're welcome here." □

Margaret A. Haapoja is a freelance writer who lives near Bovey, Minn.

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Acupuncture Warfare



*Beijing repeatedly warns it will do whatever
is necessary to reunify the "two Chinas."*

BY GEORGIE ANNE GEYER

Taiwan used to be a bleak, gray, unforgiving place. Long after the Chinese communists drove the legendary Chiang Kai-shek out of mainland China in 1949, the rocky, inhospitable island seemed doomed to eternal struggle in a besieged corner of the world. The capital, Taipei, was a gritty, embittered, industrialized city with virtually no culture or character of its own. Per-capita annual

income ranged from \$700 to \$800. Threat of invasion and oblivion were perpetual. War could come at any moment.

How things change.

Today, Taipei is an increasingly charming city of 2.6 million with lovely, tree-lined boulevards, striking modern buildings and world-class international hotels. The legendary Chiang lies at peace in a palatial mausoleum. His 24 million Taiwanese are now rich, with a per-capita income of \$14,000, compared to mainland China's puny \$500. Taiwan's

reserves are a staggering \$106 billion. Most of all, the Taiwanese people have evolved from Chiang's unbending military dictatorship to become not only a model democracy but also an economic miracle in a system that now influences even rigid Beijing.

Environmentalist

Lester Brown – president of the Earth Policy Institute in Washington and astute international analyst of change and development – says, “If one were to look for one country in the world that has done everything right, that country would be Taiwan.”

Closer Ties. Taiwan's remarkable economic victories fail to fully define the island's importance in the world. From the beginning of the Bush administration, Taiwan has been high on the president's foreign-policy agenda. Even with the war on terrorism, one of the greatest dangers to the United States is a strong, resurgent China that would attack Taiwan, as it has repeatedly said it would – forcing the island into reunification and challenging American leadership and interests in the Pacific.

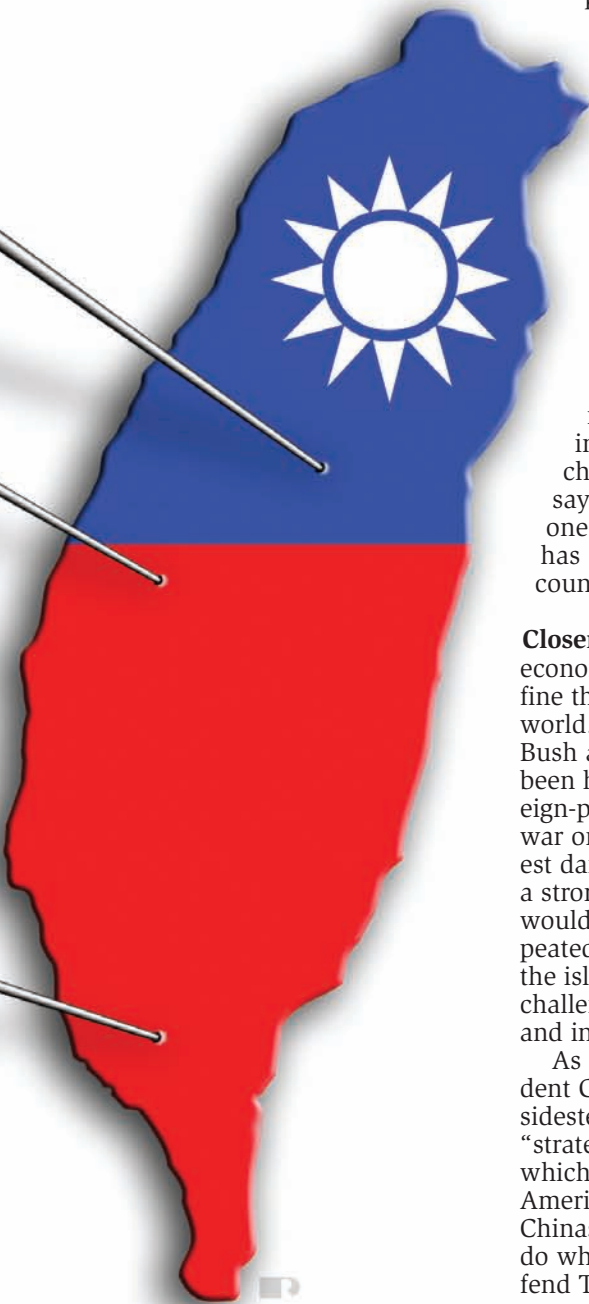
As early as spring 2001, President George W. Bush in effect sidestepped the old Kissingerian “strategic ambiguity” concept – which meant not really declaring America's position on the “two Chinas” – when he said he would do whatever it takes to help defend Taiwan. That same spring,

Some have named the new gradualist approach of Beijing “acupuncture warfare,” because of its drafted precision in hitting the nerve ends of a society instead of punching it in the nose.

after years of holding back arms sales – first because of the 1972 Nixon-Kissinger détente with Beijing and then because of President Clinton's great sympathy for Beijing – the new administration provided an unprecedented \$4 billion arms sale to the island. This included, for the first time, submarines and ships that would allow Taiwan's previously small navy to sail out from its own coasts into the South China Sea. The Taiwanese needed this aid desperately, but – as they themselves more and more realize – they also need to reform their often corrupt and poorly led forces.

In the months after Sept. 11, although no direct connection existed between Taiwan or China and the terrorist attacks, U.S. relations with Taiwan grew tighter. Washington announced that the U.S. government approved the sale of a fleet of AH-64D Apache Longbow attack helicopters to the island to fend off possible invasion from the mainland. This would be backed up by eight diesel submarines, 12 P-3C submarine-hunting aircraft, four Kidd-class destroyers, long-range radar systems and Patriot III missiles. The deal stands as the most comprehensive arms sale to Taiwan since 1992.

The key event in Taiwan's relations with the Bush administration was a visit in spring 2002 by Taiwan Defense Minister Tang Yiau-ming, who came to Florida and met with Deputy Pentagon Chief Paul Wolfowitz. It was the first visit of its kind by a senior Taiwan official.





“On the subject of Taiwan, America’s position is clear, and it will not change,” Secretary of State Colin Powell declared shortly thereafter at an Asia Society dinner in New York. “We will continue to insist that the mainland solve its differences with Taiwan peacefully. Indeed, a peaceful resolution is the foundation on which the breakthrough Sino-American communiqués were built, and the United States takes our responsibilities under the Taiwan Relations Act very, very seriously.”

Powell then warned that “an arms buildup, like those new missiles opposite Taiwan, only deepen tensions, deepen suspicion. Whether China chooses peace or coercion to resolve its differences with Taiwan will tell us a great deal about the kind of relationship China seeks not only with its neighbors, but with us.”

Takeover Strategies. Even in this new era, the old notion that the Chinese would frontally attack Taiwan from the sea is no longer the

scenario most U.S. military and strategic experts envision. The real threat to Taiwan is one of gradual neutralization, accomplished through the sophisticated destruction of its radar, command posts, airports, ports, fuel depots and power plants. Beijing is likely to destroy the Taiwanese people’s will to resist while building on policies designed to keep the United States from aiding the island. Finally, China would command any negotiations.

“If you look at China’s overall policy toward Taiwan, you see advanced weapons of all kinds,” said Chengchi University’s Joseph Wu, one of the island’s most respected military analysts. “They have deployed 400 short-range missiles on the coast facing toward Taiwan, and they are adding 50 every year. They had an 18-percent rise in their military budget last year alone, and they have been getting sophisticated new weapons from Russia. With 400 missiles, they might not destroy Taiwan – missiles dig huge

Taipei’s elaborate Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Gate memorializes Taiwan’s first president, a pivotal figure in the history of modern China. Under Chiang’s leadership, Taiwan began to modernize its economy, and the island became highly competitive in foreign trade. *corbis*

craters in the ground about 60 feet wide – but our leaders worry that by 2005-2006, the tilt will be toward China’s side.

“Today, China’s thinkers have a common theme and scenario: blockade the island and, with the missiles, take out the communications and military lines, paralyze the ports and airfields. Then they could overtake all of these installations quickly. Today, they are playing with asymmetric warfare – information warfare, cyberwarfare.”

Officials and strategists in Taipei believe Taiwan could hold on for two to three weeks in the face of such a debilitating attack, but then it would depend upon U.S. will to enter into the conflict. And despite the recent big military sale package, no one can be sure of that.

A pivotal year is 2007, when Chinese President Jiang Zemin says the reunification of the “two Chinas” must be completed. This “time of succession” is why the mainland – although on the record supporting President Bush’s “war on terrorism” – has been so quiet since Sept. 11. As CSIS analyst Jim Mann says, “At this time, they want to create as few conflicts as possible while they are working out their political succession. They changed their strategy in 2001 to rely more on economics than on military means, but their goal has not changed.”

Meanwhile, the clock is ticking down.

Some have named the new gradualist approach of Beijing “acupuncture warfare,” because of its drafted precision in hitting the nerve ends of a society instead of punching it in the nose. This approach to conflict is hardly new or unnatural to China. Indeed, it is only an updated version of the brilliant precepts of the great 5th century B.C. Chinese strategist Sun Tzu, who wrote in his famous “The Art of War” about how to treat your enemies: “Draw them in with the prospect of gain, take them by confusion. Use anger to throw them by disarray.”

The “China Lobby.” The United States has been a major player in this triangle of conflicting powers and interests for more than half a century. After the exile of the Kuomintang, as Chiang’s Nationalist Party is called today, Americans on the right in Washington, especially in Congress, formed the powerful “China Lobby,” which effectively kept alive the cause of Taiwan – then called Formosa.

Much of America’s interest in the small island involves the rise and seemingly inexorable victory of communism on the mainland. However, the attraction and commitment amounts to more than that. Many Taiwanese leaders are Christians. Many have studied alongside Americans at U.S. universities, and still others fought alongside Americans in World War II against the Japanese invaders.

“If one were to look for one country in the world that has done everything right, that country would be Taiwan.”

– Lester Brown, president of the Earth Policy Institute

In addition to Cold War anti-communism, race and geography cemented the United States to Taiwan. By the Nixon administration in the 1970s, American opinion was slowly changing; so when President Nixon, ideologically backed by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, traveled to Beijing in 1972, the two men effectively shook all the historic pillars upon which Asia policy rested. The point of the trip’s famous “Shanghai Communiqué” was to paper over the differences about Taiwan so Washington could take the mammoth leap of normalizing relations with Beijing. Essentially, the mainland’s communist “People’s Republic” and Taiwan’s “Republic of China,” as Taiwan is formally called, agreed that there was only “one China,” albeit on two sides of the strait. The United States pledged to do nothing to challenge this principle so long as China pursued reunification by peaceful means.

The circle was then closed under the administration of President Carter when, in 1979, he officially recognized communist China and broke off official relations with Taiwan. At the same time, however, he wrote the Taiwan Relations Act, under which Washington would still provide Taiwan with sufficient military means to defend itself. This sinuous and complicated relationship continued until the 1990s, when President Clinton – feeling much more sympathetic to mainland China than to Taiwan – put Taiwan on the backburner. Not only were few arms sent to Taiwan, but many officials – both Taiwanese and American – feel with some

bitterness that unnecessary steps were taken by Washington to weaken Taiwan’s ability to use the weapons it had and to develop its own systems. For example, the United States sold Taiwan a tank but substituted a hand-held crank for an automatic turret, forcing the island to mothball development of the Sky Horse missile, which is similar to the Chinese versions that now threaten the island from the mainland.

Resentment lingers regarding the Clinton years and Taiwan. With that resentment often comes a hesitation to believe that the United States would really come to the island’s aid if it were attacked. Such fears and resentments, along with a great gratitude toward the United States, were substantially ameliorated when Taiwan’s President Chen Shui-bian – who is not of the Kuomintang Party but of the independence-minded Democratic Progressive Party – was allowed by the Bush administration to visit the United States in June 2001.

The Quiet Revolution. During the 1990s, Taiwan secured a broader audience of support in America. This happened largely because of the evolution from the autocratic and often corrupt government set into place by Chiang Kai-shek into a real, functioning democracy with one of the most successful development programs, not only in Asia but in all the world. It started with what the Taiwanese call “the quiet revolution.”

“Martial law was lifted in July 1987,” Yu-ming Shaw, chairman of the *Central Daily News* and a longtime leader of the Kuomintang, reminisces in his office in downtown Taipei. “That same year, Taiwanese were allowed to go back to China to visit. Then freedom of the press finally became a reality, along with freedom of association and the formation of other political parties. In 1990 and 1992, we decided to let the masses choose their leaders in the polls, and we adopted the American primary system ... it has become 100 percent a democratic party.”



With these changes – which were deliberately put into practice step by step and which were gradual, systemic, evolutionary and based upon a refined understanding of just how far any society can be expected to change all at once – Taiwan has come to represent one of the great models of development in the world.

Could all this be destroyed by war? Could the United States really be drawn, or dragged, into the drama of still another upheaval in Asia? Surely the Chinese have repeatedly, and without apparent second thought, warned that they will attack if they must to reunify the “two Chinas.” Importantly, they now also seek the riches of the South China Sea – oil riches, some say, beyond belief – also claimed by Taiwan and the Philippines, among other nations. The Chinese military, the People’s Liberation Army, often has its own geopolitical policies, strategies and aims – in fact, its military writings and manuals are filled with talk of furious conflict with

both Taiwan and America.

On the other hand, early in summer 2001, the Kuomintang issued a policy paper stating that the best option for Taiwan would be to form a confederation under which both entities would maintain their central governments and control their own diplomacy, national defense and internal affairs. The confederation idea still exists, but nothing has been done to put it into practice.

So at this pregnant moment in time for Southeast Asia and for the entire Chinese universe of peoples and trends, the world could go any of several directions.

The danger is clear. The Chinese military may come to feel emboldened to act upon its own or for its own institutional or perceived power interest. Chaos within China, caused by overpopulation, could collapse the fragile communist system. Or the terrible water and land shortage may force Beijing to act outside to divert people’s attention.

The hope is clear that enough

A Taiwan soldier’s post in Jinmen, a defense base in the Taiwan Strait, overlooks communist China’s Xiamen port across the narrow channel. Jinmen is on normal alert despite Beijing’s fury at Taipei for scrapping its “one-China” policy. *Corbis*

time will pass and China will change enough to be more like Taiwan, resulting in a peaceful reunification. The Kuomintang proposal may foreshadow such a development. But until a proposal like that of the Kuomintang is embraced by both sides, the standoff in the Taiwan Strait remains one of the most dangerous situations in the world. It also remains one in which the United States is deeply and inexorably involved. □

Georgie Anne Geyer is a syndicated columnist. She visited Taiwan six times between 1969 and 2001, and China six times between 1983 and 1998.

*Article design and illustration:
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Head for Business, Heart for Kids

Mick Shannon's business savvy and vision for helping kids launched Children's Miracle Network.



BY ELISSA KAUPISCH

Kids are Mick Shannon's life. Blessed with eight children – four still at home – and one grandchild, Shannon spends most of his free time with them. What's more, he's working to improve the lives of other people's kids. Shannon is president and co-founder of Children's Miracle Network, a

nonprofit organization and American Legion corporate partner that supports 170 children's hospitals across North America.

Shannon knows the value of hard work, courage and commitment. After graduating with a teaching degree in political science and history from Brigham Young University in 1973, the Salt Lake City native worked for March of

CMN president and co-founder Mick Shannon welcomes 7-year-old Miracle Child Jayne Preucil of Omaha, Neb. Shannon believes partnership with The American Legion is important because of the Legion's track record of helping youngsters. *Courtesy Children's Miracle Network*

Dimes, where he learned the business of fund-raising. He left March of Dimes in 1982 to pursue a dream. He and business partner Joe Lake co-founded Children's Miracle

Network. Recalling CMN's early years in the basement of his home, Shannon says, "We didn't have a lot of success at first. We didn't have an office, and we didn't get paid. But we stuck with it anyway."

Although he has every reason to be proud of what he's accomplished – building an organization from the ground up to one of national renown – Shannon is selfless and unassuming. He gives everyone else credit.

"Joe was the driving force in the creation and success of Children's Miracle Network," Shannon says, speaking of Lake, who served as executive vice president for 16 years before retiring four years ago.

Shannon also praises the more than 350,000 hospital staff members who he says are "dedicated to helping children with critical-care needs." Of the 17 million children served by Children's Miracle Network hospitals, emergency rooms, clinics and outreach programs, "most go on to lead normal lives," Shannon says. "Children's Miracle Network is an organization that enriches lives by providing much-needed medical support and equipment to children, our nation's most valuable asset."

Shannon shares the Children's Miracle Network story with *The American Legion Magazine*.

The American Legion Magazine: How did the idea for Children's Miracle Network originate?

Mick Shannon: Working for the March of Dimes, I became familiar with children's hospitals, the work they do and how they provide quality care for kids, regardless of their families' ability to pay. Over time, the idea of Children's Miracle Network came to me. I envisioned 100 percent of the money raised going directly to benefit local children's hospitals. After leaving March of Dimes in May 1982, I met with the Osmond family and John Schneider and shared the vision and the dream. With my business partner, Joe Lake, we started Children's Miracle Network. We started recruiting hospitals, TV stations, celebrities and corporate sponsors. We had a very meager first-year effort, but we've grown ever since.



Of the 17 million children served by CMN-affiliated health services, most go on to lead normal lives.

TALM: How does Children's Miracle Network help children?

MS: Children's Miracle Network is all about raising funds to serve local children's hospitals. The hospitals are doing the tough work, helping children in trouble 24-7. Our task is simply to raise money to help them do their jobs. We keep our efforts that narrow and that focused.

TALM: How has the organization grown over the years?

MS: To continue to grow, it's essential to build name recognition and community awareness for each hospital, and to secure more hospitals. We've grown from no hospitals to 170 and no corporate sponsors to 75. Our first year we managed to raise \$4.7 million, our second year \$12 million and our third year \$21 million. Last year, we raised \$232 million.

TALM: Besides raising the name recognition of local hospitals and securing more hospitals, what other factors have affected CMN's growth?

MS: The fact that 100 percent of the money goes directly to serve kids in their own neighborhoods and communities is critical to our growth. Also, we're associated with renowned, state-of-the-art children's hospitals that have the highest levels of integrity. People know they can take their children there for help, regardless of their ability to pay, and get the finest care possible.

TALM: How large is your staff?

MS: We like to refer to how small

it is. It's really an effort – and a serious one – to keep our staff small. It's currently around 55.

TALM: With such a small staff, do you rely heavily on volunteers?

MS: Our fund-raising involves all volunteers. We want people to take ownership by raising the funds themselves. That's why partnership with The American Legion is so great. The 4.5 million members of the Legion family can engage in a variety of activities to support their local children's hospitals.

TALM: How does a hospital become affiliated with Children's Miracle Network?

MS: A hospital has to be a premier nonprofit children's facility. They accept kids regardless of their families' abilities to pay. And they offer tertiary care, care that you can't find anywhere else. When a child is critically ill, this is the place to go for the latest, state-of-the-art care. These hospitals have the resources to help kids with cancer, heart disease, muscular dystrophy and AIDS. The equipment is very expensive. That's where Children's Miracle Network helps out.

TALM: Can you tell us about one "miracle kid" who has particularly touched your heart?

MS: There's one who really stands out for me. A young boy, Alvaro Garza, and his brother were playing on the ice on the Red River just outside Fargo, N.D., when he fell through the ice. Alvaro's brother ran for help. The local fire department and rescue crews and police scoured the river, breaking the ice, trying to find Alvaro. They finally pulled him out of the icy water 45 minutes later, a limp little 8-year-old who was clinically dead; he had no pulse. They rushed him to our hospital in Fargo and began to work on him. A video camera taped the hospital staff bringing Alvaro back to life.

Alvaro was treated at the hospital for about six to seven days and experienced a complete and miraculous recovery. This was especially poignant because Alvaro was revived by a bypass machine that

warmed his blood, a sophisticated piece of equipment a small hospital in a small community normally wouldn't have. The equipment was purchased with funds from Children's Miracle Network.

Alvaro was later featured on "The Today Show," "Good Morning America" and in newspaper articles across the country. We met Alvaro and his family, and they were featured on one of our telethons.

TALM: Describe the campaign involving The American Legion.

MS: The Legion campaign is a real departure for us. With the Legion, we're creating an American Legion-branded campaign they will own, build equity in and be known for. It's an exciting, new approach. It looks like both organizations are going to benefit from it immensely, and as is always the case, the kids will benefit. We think The American Legion relationship will result in one of our biggest fund-raising campaigns.

Children's Miracle Network will be providing educational and fund-raising materials to make it more effective. But every penny the Legion raises will go directly to local hospitals.

TALM: How does the partnership advance American Legion causes?

MS: We will be launching for the first time a flag-icon program at retail stores, where customers can purchase a paper flag for \$1 and put their names on it. Each will have a Legion logo on it as well as the local hospital's name. Customers will know that every dollar goes to their local children's hospital and that the Legion has made this campaign possible. We've had the paper Miracle Balloon icon campaign with other corporations for about 12 years, and it averages \$18 million annually. We think the Legion's paper-flag program, which will run annually between Memorial Day and July 4, has the same potential.

The Legion also participates in walk-a-thons, which brought in \$1.5 million last year. Children's Miracle Network sends kits that provide everything posts need,

Star-power supporters

Pictured below are just a few of the celebrities from entertainment and sports who publicly support Children's Miracle Network. Others include Marilyn McCoo, Bill Cosby, Bob Hope, Merlin Olsen, Steve Young, Robin Roberts, Dan Patrick and Sarah Hughes.



Entertainer John Schneider *CMN*



NFL quarterback Drew Bledsoe *CMN*



Former Olympic gymnasts Mary Lou Retton & Kerri Strug *CMN*



Entertainer Marie Osmond *CMN*



Ice skater Michelle Kwan *CMN*

including remittance envelopes for their local hospitals.

The fit between Children's Miracle Network and The American Legion is so special because the Legion already has the demonstrated commitment to helping children as part of its mission. It's not lip service. We can point to program after program the Legion has initiated and supported over the years that has benefited kids.

It's also special because of the

large number of people The American Legion brings to the table. And "people power" is what we're all about. Since our activities are based on campaigns, the more people involved, the more revenue local children's hospitals will realize. □

Elissa Kaupisch is an assistant editor at The American Legion Magazine.

Article design: King Doxsee

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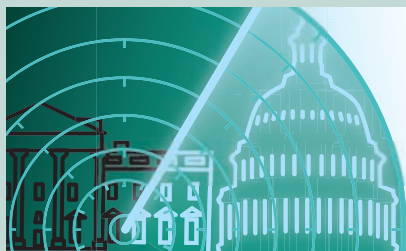
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New 'DEW' line

During the Cold War, the Pentagon relied on an interlocking chain of radars across the northern frontier of Alaska and Canada to detect the early stages of a Soviet missile attack. Thankfully, the attack never came, but the detection system – known as the distant-early warning line, or “DEW” line – helped provide security and stability during the most anxious days of the Cold War. As America wades deeper into the global war on terror, the Pentagon is preparing to employ some of the DEW line’s principles to detect biological attacks.

Using environmental monitoring instruments to collect air samples and special software to gather massive amounts of data from hospitals, pharmacies and other health-care providers, the Defense Department’s new medical-surveillance system will attempt to track the outbreak and spread of infectious diseases before they reach epidemic stages.



Paul Bergeron, one of DoD’s bio-terror experts, says, “In this game, 12 hours, 24 hours or 48 hours can make a big difference in treating people.”

The Pentagon’s Defense Threat Reduction Agency will play a lead role in administering the system. By detecting an increase in specif-

ic kinds of drug purchases, prescription orders and hospital visits, Pentagon planners hope the system will give public-health officials and the military a chance to counter the bioterrorism threat. If such a system had been in place during the anthrax blitz in fall 2001, government officials might have been able to respond more rapidly and effectively.

Still in the pilot stage, the \$300-million program will use data from Washington, D.C.; Albuquerque, N.M.; and two other U.S. cities to be decided. The remaining two cities will likely have mass-transit systems, major airports and coastal exposure.

– A.W.D.



The view from Europe

In one of the most comprehensive surveys of European attitudes on U.S. foreign policy in recent memory, the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations and German Marshall Fund of the United States have unearthed some disturbing findings. According to the survey, which was conducted in six European countries, 55 percent of Europeans believe U.S. foreign policy is to blame for the terror attacks of Sept. 11. Ominously, 65 percent of Europeans believe the European Union should become a superpower on par with the United States.

However, not all the findings were so strikingly out of step with

this side of the Atlantic. The survey found that Europeans view international terrorism as a serious problem. In fact, 75 percent of those polled support military action against terrorist bases. In addition, 60 percent of Europeans would support a U.S.-led attack against Iraq.

Guerilla war

More than a quarter-century has passed since the end of the Vietnam War, but the war continues to haunt the families whose sons, fathers and husbands never returned. According to most estimates, some 2,000 American servicemen remain unaccounted for.

Over the past decade, Roger Hall has crusaded for those troops and their families. Hall is a researcher with the POW-MIA Freedom-Of-Information-Act Litigation Account, a nonprofit organization based in Silver Spring, Md. The organization is committed to finding answers about America’s Vietnam-era MIAs. Hall’s organization uses FOIA requests to pry open closed files and closed doors.

Hall is focusing his efforts on the CIA. He believes the CIA is not complying with a 1992 order by President George H.W. Bush and another issued by President Clinton a year later requiring the release of all MIA-related documentation not posing a risk to national security. Hall says the CIA has invoked the national-security exception to withhold some 560 documents.

The POW-MIA FOIA Litigation Account is locked in a legal battle with the CIA to force the release of those documents. Hall, who began his guerilla campaign to open the CIA’s secret files as a graduate student, plans to expand the FOIA assault beyond the CIA and hopes to receive authorization from additional family members to pursue other leads in the coming year. For more information about those efforts, visit www.powfoia.org.

– Alan W. Dowd

BOXING DAY – MORE ABOUT GIVING THAN RETURNING

Those who walk through the valley of debt every December may take time in the checkout line to ponder the true spirit of giving. In this country, it's a safe bet that few will look to Boxing Day to find that spirit. Celebrated Dec. 26 in England, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, Boxing Day is frequently misinterpreted as:

■ The day you box up all the junk you did not want for Christmas and return it to the stores.

■ The day you stuff all the wrapping paper and ribbons into boxes and set it out by the curb.

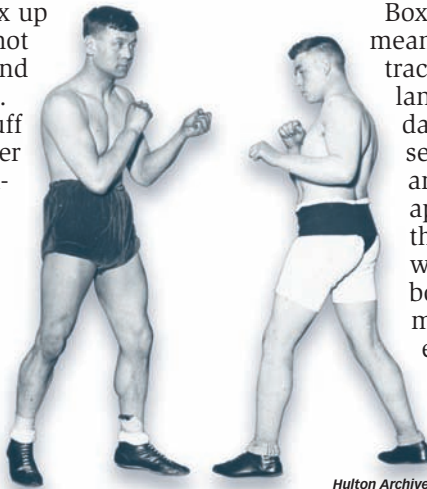
■ The day you strap on the gloves and go a few rounds with the in-laws who have been underfoot for days.

■ The second-busiest shopping day of the year.

Boxing Day is none of those things.

According to a Purdue University study, the year's biggest retail-sales

days are not Thanksgiving (when presents are bought) or the day after Christmas (when presents are returned). In fact, the day after Thanksgiving ranks between fifth and 10th among the year's biggest sales days, and December's retail push comes the week before Christmas – not after.



Boxing Day, meanwhile, can be traced to early England when, on the day after Christmas, servants, peasants and errand runners appeared before their employers who would fill their boxes with goods or money as a year-end bonus. The holiday evolved into a time to express gratitude to all those who work

in service to others, a time to volunteer hours and dollars for the needy and, most especially, a time to embrace the true spirit of giving.

SLOW ROAD TO RECOVERY

88,000 Approximate number of U.S. servicemembers still missing in action from all conflicts.

8,100 Approximate number missing in action from the Korean War.



1,000 Approximate number of American soldiers lost in battles of the Chosin campaign in Korea.

167 Sets of remains of U.S. soldiers recovered since 1996 after 24 joint operations into

North Korea to retrieve those remains.

13 Number of positive identifications of those remains, which were returned to the families for burial with military honors.

Department of Defense

AN EARLY GRAVE

A 63-year-old Sicilian man recently was so concerned about his mausoleum that he made regular trips to the cemetery to oversee its construction. On his final trip, however, he climbed a ladder to get a better view, slipped, hit his head on a marble step and fell dead into his own tomb.

FIXING A HOLE

After inmate David Ivy escaped through a hole in the fence at the Shelby County, Tenn., jail last spring, officials discovered that he had escaped through the exact same hole in 1991. It was never repaired.

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A MILLION-DOLLAR MESS

An attorney prosecuting Vladimiro Montesinos says Peru's former spy chief is not only accused of embezzling hundreds of millions of dollars from the destitute government – he also may be blamed for spilling the world's most costly cup of coffee. Attorney Luis Vargas says Montesinos dumped his java on a \$1 million bank certificate, which in Peru is the

same as cash. The certificate was rendered worthless. "From then on, he put his money in bank accounts," Vargas said. Montesinos faces more than 50 separate trials for corruption. He is accused of collecting some \$250 million in state funds and kickbacks as well as orchestrating bribes, arms deals and human-rights abuses.

VERBATIM

"There's nothing sadder in this world than to awake Christmas morning and not be a child."

– ERMA BOMBECK

Late columnist and author

"I stopped believing in Santa Claus when I was 6. Mother took me to see him in a department store, and he asked for my autograph."

– SHIRLEY TEMPLE BLACK

"Anyone who knows anything isn't talking, and anyone with any sense isn't talking. Therefore, the people that are talking to the media are, by definition, people who don't know anything."

– DEFENSE SECRETARY DONALD RUMSFELD

on Pentagon news leaks

"I don't see how patriotism is intertwined with remembering people's lives."

A 20-YEAR-OLD

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJOR

following a campus controversy over the singing of "The Star-Spangled Banner" and other patriotic songs in a Sept. 11 anniversary observance

Make time for exercise

Trends change in the face of an aging population.

BY TARA PARKER-POPE

Often, the toughest part of exercise is getting started.

The aches and pains of aging – bad knees, back pain and muscle fatigue – all make exercise seem impossible. But as the population ages, exercise gurus are becoming wiser. Feel-the-burn exercise programs are out. Safe, comfortable exercise without the pain is in.

If this year's New Year's resolution is to start that exercise program – whether it's just to walk more or run a marathon – here's a look at some good ways to get out of the blocks:

■ **Walking.** About one-fifth of folks 55 and older make a habit of walking, the most popular exercise among older Americans. All you need is a good pair of shoes. Be creative; don't just walk around the block. Walk to the store or the library. Check out local road races, which often include short mile-long "fun runs" for kids, older adults and walkers. Sign up for a walk-a-thon and raise money for a cause while raising your fitness level.

■ **Running.** Does the mere mention of running make your body ache? It doesn't have to. The new trend encourages runners to take it easy with regular walk-breaks.

New walk-break runners typically are advised to start training by walking for five minutes and running one minute. Over time, taper down until you are walking one minute

and running one minute. Stay there if you like, or slowly ratchet up to two or three minutes of running and one minute of walking. If you're feeling ambitious, add more minutes of running, but don't exceed five or six minutes of running for every one-minute walk break.

Jeff Galloway, the 1972 Olympian and marathon runner, believes walk-breaks can help anyone finish a marathon after only six months of training. For more information, visit www.jeffgalloway.com.

■ **Yoga.** Yoga is one of the hottest fitness trends in the country. Many doctors think it can help treat serious medical problems. Some studies suggest regular yoga can help patients with asthma, arthritis, chronic back pain, mental-health problems and cardiovascular disease.

The best thing about yoga is

that it's self-paced. Students attending class for the first time won't feel intimidated sitting next to someone with years of experience and will be able to do some version of every posture. Most studios have belts, blocks, pillows and mats to help the novice get started.

Some popular, so-called "power yogas" taught in health clubs are physically demanding and often too difficult for beginners. Instead, look for a yoga studio that teaches only yoga and ask an instructor to steer you toward the best class for you.

■ **Personal Trainers.** The hardest part of working out is doing it. A personal trainer gives you a regular exercise buddy who will turn drill sergeant if you slack off. And experienced personal trainers can help ease sedentary people safely back into an exercise program.

Personal trainers aren't cheap. The fees range from \$25 to \$100 or more an hour. It's important to find a good match, so talk with other clients about the trainer's personal style. Most trainers will give you a free session to help you decide.

Quiz the trainer on his or her experience and education. Many trainers have college degrees or some health, sports or medical training. A good trainer will want your medical history and will check with your doctor about exercise restrictions.

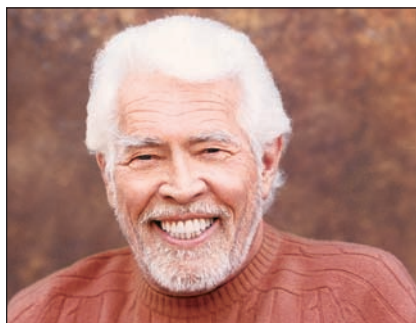
Tara Parker-Pope is an author and health writer for The Wall Street Journal.

Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their personal physicians when they have health problems.



Image Ideas

James Coburn Tells How He Beat Joint Stiffness



Our *Man Flint* actor James Coburn suffered for 20 years until he found MEGAMSM.

For 20 years, severe joint problems made my life a living hell. Any kind of movement was difficult. I could barely walk—even getting up from a chair was pure agony. I went from doctor to doctor trying every medication and treatment available, but nothing seemed to work. I thought my career was over.

Then, a friend introduced me to Dr. Ronald Lawrence, a doctor who prefers to get to the cause of ailments rather than hand out drugs. Dr. Lawrence suggested that I had a deficiency of dietary sulfur because it plays an especially critical role in maintaining the elasticity and flexibility of the connective tissue and fibrous cartilage in the joints.

I was astounded because not one of the dozens of doctors I had seen over the last 20 years told me that. Dr. Lawrence also told me that sulfur is in *every healthy cell* and is used for repairing many of the structures of the body. However, many people don't get enough sulfur in their diets because farmers don't replace sulfur in the soil when they fertilize, and food processing often destroys it.

Dr. Lawrence sent me home with some dietary supplements (methyl-sulfonylmethane) and suggested that I take *megadoses* of them morning and night for three or four weeks, explaining that it takes some time to replenish your body from so great a deficiency.

Well, the fourth morning, I woke up and could hardly believe it. I didn't

have any pain, and I was bubbling with energy. I thought I must be having the occasional good day, thank God. The next morning, I awoke feeling terrific again and could hardly wait until Dr. Lawrence's office opened to call him with the news.

"Will it last?" I asked hopefully. Dr. Lawrence said I may have troubling times during the first month, but because of my early relief, he doubted that I would have many bad days. Dr. Lawrence explained that sulfur blocks the pain response in the nerve fibers for some people and helps rebuild crucial cells in the joints, but it can't do a complete rebuilding job all by itself.

Your joints are lined with a substance made from collagen and so is cartilage. Surprisingly, Dr. Lawrence said that collagen II from chicken sternums has been shown in clinical tests to be the best helper in repairing damage to your joints.

Also, he said that the Chinese's 2,000-plus years of medical experience with herbs has shown that two botanicals, *Corydalis turtchaninovii* and *Melia toosendan*, are important pain-relieving compounds.

Dr. Lawrence mixed the pain-relieving and sulfur-containing compounds, along with the collagen, together for me. Not once have I felt any side effects, because these are plant foods. I convinced Dr. Lawrence to turn over the formula to a manufacturer so the millions of people suffering the way I did can find relief. He chose Gero Vita International, and I agreed to let them print my story here *only if* they would let you try the formula, called MEGAMSM, at the lowest possible price.

Gero Vita knows how effective MEGAMSM is, so they didn't have any risk in going a step further to get you to try it. First, they'll give you a whopping 60% off a 30-day supply—only \$9.95 instead of the usual \$24.95. Plus, you can try MEGAMSM for 30 days, and if you don't like it, just mail the bottle back with the unused portion, and you'll get all of your \$9.95 back.

Of course, if it works for you *like it has for me*, you'll never want to go a day without MEGAMSM. However, you can't stock up on this because *it must be fresh for it to work well*. Therefore, Gero Vita will assume that if you haven't sent back the bottle with the unused portion within 30 days, you want to continue to take MEGAMSM. For your convenience, they have set up an automated delivery system so *you'll get a fresh supply at just the right time every month*.

Because Gero Vita saves money with the automated shipping and billing process, you won't be charged for any shipping costs—only \$24.95 will appear on your credit card statement each month. You can cancel at any time by mail or phone. There is no obligation.

During his research, Dr. Lawrence found that nutrients in some foods help your joints, while some foods can make them hurt. So, the doctor prepared a booklet entitled *What You Eat or Don't Eat Can Make Your Arthritis Better or Worse*. Gero Vita will send this valuable booklet to you *free* when you try MEGAMSM.

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New heart therapies show promise

Winning the battle is a matter of prevention.

BY DR. PAUL M. HOFFMAN

Congestive heart failure, also known as chronic heart failure, has been called America's new epidemic. Nearly 5 million Americans have the condition, and more than 500,000 new cases develop each year in the United States. It is the most common medical diagnosis among patients admitted to VA hospitals.

CHF occurs when the heart can't pump enough blood to supply the rest of the body – unlike a heart attack, during which the heart itself does not receive enough blood.

Just as an accident on the freeway causes traffic to back up, a slowdown in the heart's pumping action causes blood returning to the heart to back up in the veins. This in turn causes fluids to build up in the body's tissues. When this happens in the lungs, the result is shortness of breath and persistent coughing or wheezing. Fluid buildup also causes swelling, or edema, usually in the legs and ankles. Other signs of CHF are fatigue, poor appetite, mental fog and a faster heart rate. If you have any of these symptoms and have not been examined recently, see your doctor immediately.

CHF usually develops over many years. Possible contributing factors include:

- High blood pressure, which causes the heart to pump harder than normal to keep the blood circulating. The heart chambers then grow larger and weaker. People with high blood pressure are twice as likely to develop CHF.

- Arteriosclerosis or other forms of coronary artery disease, which can restrict blood flow to the heart and lead to CHF or a heart attack.

- Past heart attacks, which can kill heart muscle and force remaining

healthy tissue to work harder to maintain blood circulation.

Other medical conditions can lead to CHF. By far, the greatest underlying contributors to this disease are the same ones implicated in heart attack: smoking, excess weight, unhealthy diet, stress and lack of exercise. These are lifestyle problems of enormous scope in our nation, and they bear much of the blame for the CHF epidemic.

The Outlook. CHF can be deadly. About two-thirds of patients die within five years of diagnosis, many of them from sudden cardiac arrest. But with major lifestyle changes and careful treatment, the outlook can be much brighter.

In addition to making recommendations on diet, exercise and stress reduction, your doctor may prescribe medications. Among the commonly used drugs for CHF are angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors, which ease pressure inside the blood vessels so the heart doesn't have to pump as hard; diuretics, which reduce excess fluid in the body; and digitalis, which boosts the heart's contractions.

Beta-blockers are sometimes prescribed to help maintain the heart's pumping ability. Interestingly, a trial conducted by VA and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute showed that blacks benefited less than whites from beta-blockers. The study underscored the critical need for adequate minority representation in clinical trials.

The Role of Research. VA's research program is a good example of how science is tackling the CHF epidemic on many fronts.

- Cardiac surgeons at the Houston VA Medical Center are taking part in a groundbreaking study of gene therapy for patients with failing hearts. By injecting a gene into patients' coronary arteries to trigger the growth of new blood vessels, the doctors hope to increase blood flow to the heart.

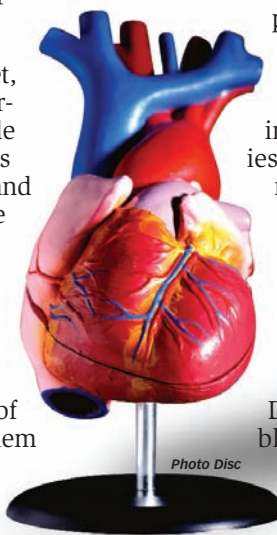
- VA scientists are developing tissue-engineering techniques to replace damaged heart tissue.

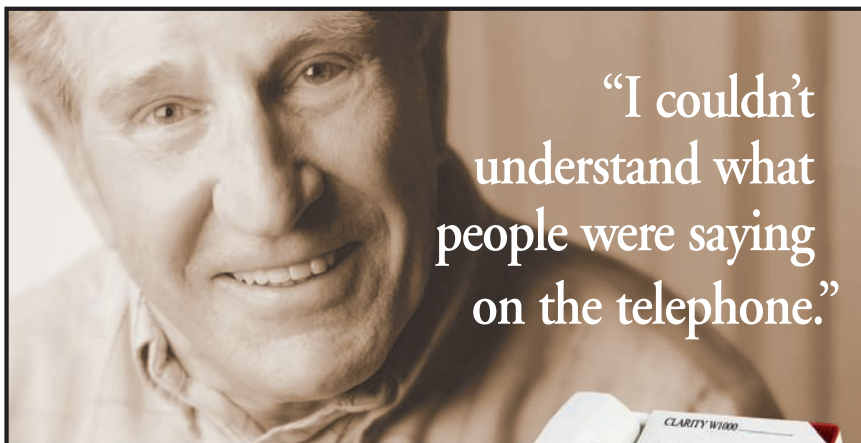
- A VA cardiologist in San Diego led trials of a simple blood test to help emergency-room doctors quickly diagnose congestive heart failure.

These are just a few examples. In fact, VA's budget last year for research on heart disease – much of which was focused on CHF – surpassed \$27 million. It is hoped that through VA efforts, future diagnosis and treatment of CHF will be greatly improved. But the real key to winning the battle against CHF lies in preventing the condition through healthy diet, regular exercise and stress reduction. In this regard, it is your effort that matters most.

Paul M. Hoffman, M.D., is director of the Medical Research Service in the Veterans Health Administration.

Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their personal physicians when they have health problems.





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ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY JANUARY 31, 2003

More than just numbers

Conley vows to put faces on cases for VA backlog of 300,000.

BY STEVE BROOKS

National Commander Ronald F. Conley asked that the lights of The American Legion's National Executive Committee Room be dimmed. He told members of the NEC he wanted the proper mood to pay respect to those who had served in the room before, making decisions that benefited the nation's veterans and their families and the security of the nation. Now it was their turn, he told the NEC, which met in Indianapolis for the 2002 Fall Meetings.

"This is a place of inspiration," he said. "This room stands as a testament to the conviction of our predecessors to never fail those with whom they served. But the fact we are gathered here at this moment in history signifies that there is work to be done, that we have some big shoes to fill."

In the low light of the NEC Room, Conley vowed to make America aware of the 700,000 veterans waiting for VA claims decisions and the 300,000 waiting for health care.

"These men and women waiting in line are what the VA and Congress refer to as the 'backlog,'" Conley said. "The 'backlog' is so impersonal. It doesn't do justice to the suffering and the worry and disappointment that these veterans are experiencing. In Washington jargon, they are just numbers. They are nameless, faceless statistics, without feeling, without



National Commander Ronald F. Conley holds up a letter calling for mandatory, rather than discretionary, spending for VA health care. Inadequate funding has led to overcrowded waiting rooms and long delays for appointments. *James V. Carroll*

family and without humanity.

"Yet behind each of those numbers is a person, is a veteran who was once young and vibrant, who was once fit and healthy, who served our country in time of war.

But today, behind each of those numbers is a person who is sick and desperately clinging to diminishing hope as the lines grow ever longer. These 'numbers,' these 'statistics' are our comrades, men and women with whom we served."

Conley said while he believes

Congress and VA do care about veterans, improved care and a better-funded system won't come until veterans are no longer regarded as numbers on a balance sheet.

"Humans, no matter what their station in life, no matter what re-

sponsibilities they carry, always respond to the suffering of real people," he said. "That's why we need to put a human face on each one of these numbers. We need to find them, and we need to tell their individual stories."

Conley said he will ask every department, district and post to put faces and names on the 300,000 veterans waiting for VA health care. Survey packets will be sent out to every post commander and copied to department officers and district commanders so the Legion can produce a list of veterans and their individual cases to present to Congress and the VA.

"There is nothing we have to do at the national level, at the department level or at the post level that is more important than this," Conley said. "We must reach out to these veterans ... and give them hope and help before time passes them by."

Steve Brooks is editor of The American Legion Dispatch.

Don't be just a number

Completed surveys should be mailed to:

"I Am Not A Number"

c/o Matt Grills
The American Legion
National Headquarters
PO Box 1055
Indianapolis, IN 46206

Or call

1-866-539-2509

Check honored 32 years later

Victor Graham was 5 when his brother, Burdette, died in hostile territory in Vietnam on Oct. 19, 1967. His parents, Iris and Simon Graham, were presented their son's Bronze Star posthumously in a ceremony at Fort Hamilton Army Base, Brooklyn, N.Y. On Jan. 18, 1968, the government issued a check for accumulated salary to Iris, Burdette's beneficiary, for \$1,380.61. Iris never saw the check. Her husband, distraught over the loss of their son, placed the check and the Bronze Star in a safe-deposit box without ever telling his wife.

When Simon died in 1999, Iris and her son Victor discovered the uncashed check in the safe-deposit box. They presented it to their bank but were told it could not be honored because it was "stale-dated." Undaunted, they took the issue to the Department of the Army. They were told that checks of this type must be cashed within one year of issuance and that the six-year statute of limitations for unusual circumstances such as this had expired in 1974. The two appealed to their congressman. When that failed, they involved the White House. Again, the same reply.

In December 2001, Iris and Simon pleaded their case to the Office of the New York City Public Advocate.

Ralph Peretto, ombudsman for the public advocate and member of Brooklyn's American Legion Post 1872, took their case to the Secretary of the Army. Finally, several months later, Peretto received notice that the statute of limitations had been waived.

Thanks to the persistence of a veteran's family and the efforts of a dedicated Legionnaire, Iris Graham finally received the replacement check.

Jesse Brown was 'veteran's veteran'

Former Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Jesse Brown, who served from January 1993 to July 1997, took pride in calling himself the secretary "for" veterans affairs. After his passing last summer at age 58, he was remembered for the opportunities he helped create for veterans.

"Jesse Brown was the veteran's veteran – a man of unceasing commitment and advocacy for all who have served their country, especially those who were disabled in service," VA Secretary Anthony J. Principi said.

In his four-and-a-half years as leader of the second largest cabinet department, Brown earned a reputation as a dynamic manager and remarkable activist. Under his leadership, VA decentralized its health-care structure, began to offer more outpatient, primary-care



Jesse Brown AP

services, and expanded benefits for former prisoners of war and for veterans who suffered from Agent Orange and Gulf War-related illnesses.

He also is credited with increasing VA services to homeless veterans through grants, and expanding programs for women veterans and veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. In a call for VA employees to be more sensitive to veterans' needs, he ordered training called "Putting Veterans First."

Brown, who was disabled by enemy fire while serving as a Marine in Vietnam, acted as a veterans advocate throughout his civilian career. Before becoming VA secretary, he worked for 25 years as a national service officer with Disabled American Veterans and as DAV's executive director from 1989 to 1993.

New GI Bill increase takes effect

Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., recently announced the second major increase in the GI Bill college-education benefit authorized by his legislation. The increase, which took effect Oct. 1, raises the monthly benefit from \$800 to \$900. A third increase takes effect Oct. 1, 2003, raising the monthly benefit to \$985.

Smith, who spoke at a press conference on the campus of Thomas Edison State College in New Jersey in late September, said he organized the event to "get the word out that the GI Bill is an unbeatable value for servicemembers looking to pursue higher education or specialized training." Smith is chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Smith's legislation, the Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-103), authorized three increases to the Montgomery GI Bill program, increasing

the lifetime benefit by 46 percent from \$24,192 (prior to Oct. 1, 2001) to \$35,460 on Oct. 1, 2003.

Under The American Legion-authored GI Bill program, a veteran who served on active duty for three years – upon separation from the military – is eligible for 36 months of educational assistance benefits at a qualified education institution, including vocational and other professional training courses. The monthly benefit can be used to pay for tuition, books, fees, room and board, and other living expenses while attending school. For veterans who served two years on active duty, the monthly benefit rose to \$732 in October and is set to grow again on Oct. 1, 2003, to \$800 per month.

The GI Bill ensures servicemembers get the assistance they need to re-enter civilian life. "The GI Bill is, and will remain, a cornerstone of that effort," Smith said.



U.N. Honor Guard members unload one of 12 flag-draped caskets from a U.S. Air Force C-17 at Yakota Air Base in Japan. The caskets contain what is believed to be the remains of U.S. servicemen missing since the Korean War. *USAF photo*

Remains of U.S. servicemen recovered in North Korea

Remains believed to be those of eight American soldiers missing in action from the Korean War were repatriated recently in formal ceremonies in Korea. The remains were flown aboard a U.S. Air Force aircraft from Pyongyang, North Korea, under escort of a uniformed honor guard to Yokota Air Base, Japan, where a U.N. Command repatriation ceremony was held.

A joint team operating near the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea recovered five sets of remains believed to be those of U.S. Army soldiers from the 7th Infantry Division who fought against Chinese forces in late 1950.

A second team recovered three sets of remains in the area along the Kuryong River near the junc-

tion of Unsan and Kujang counties, about 60 miles north of Pyongyang. The area was the site of battles between communist forces and the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry and 25th Infantry Divisions in November 1950. Approximately 1,000 Americans are estimated to have been lost in battles of the Chosin campaign.

The 28-person U.S. contingent was composed primarily of specialists from the Army's Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii. The Defense Department's Prisoner of War and Missing Personnel Office negotiated terms with the North Koreans in June, which led to the scheduling of three operations this year. The final operations took place in September and October.

Thank a servicemember

Anyone with Internet access can send a virtual thank-you card to servicemembers via the Defend America Web site:

www.defendamerica.mil/nmam.html

Personalized e-mails to servicemembers may still be sent: **www.operationdearabby.net**

New e-mail service offered

Want to stay abreast of legislative issues and other information directly affecting veterans and their families? The American Legion now provides a Legion-related news service to its members via e-mail.

To enroll, visit the Legion Web site at www.register.legion.org and provide an e-mail address. Members must also include name and membership numbers as they appear on their membership cards.

E-mail addresses will be used for official purposes only and will not be shared or sold to other organizations.

Avis offers new services

Avis Rent-A-Car System Inc., one of The American Legion's affinity partners, is upgrading its services to make car rental more pleasant and affordable for Legion family members.

Avis, a wholly owned subsidiary of Cendant Corporation, operates the world's second largest general-use car rental business, providing business and leisure customers with a wide range of services at more than 1,700 locations.

Avis' "Preferred Service" saves time for travelers. Rental agreements are ready upon arrival, and customers are taken directly to their rental cars, avoiding long lines at the counter. The Roving Rapid Return service produces a receipt in less than a minute.

To obtain the discounted fees, members must mention the Legion membership number, G3436, when reserving. Every car rental using the membership number supports Legion programs.



For more information or to reserve your vehicle, visit the Legion Web site: **www.legion.org**

Or Avis' Web site: **www.avis.com**

Commander announces 'Pot O' Gold' program

Throughout the 2002-2003 membership campaign, American Legion National

Commander Ronald F.

Conley encourages members to reach

for the "pot o' gold." The membership contest rules are simple: one "Pot

O' Gold" cap pin is awarded for every five new members recruited into The Ameri-

For more information

Contact Internal Affairs:
PHONE: (317) 630-1336
EMAIL: ia@legion.org

cian Legion. The program is open to all Legion family members, including Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion, provided the new members are enrolled as Legionnaires. Members may qualify for this award more than once, which could easily lead to further recognition: the Silver Brigade, the Gold

Brigade, "Department Recruiter of the Year" status or "National Recruiter of the Year" status.

"My 'Pot O' Gold' goal as National Commander is to recruit at least 7,500 new members into the world's largest veterans' organization," Conley says.

All certification forms for the

program must arrive at American Legion National Headquarters on or before July 1, 2003. Upon receipt, membership staff will confirm each new-member status. Once earned, members should receive their "Pot O' Gold" pins within three weeks of the confirmation date.



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LOOK FOR ADDITIONAL BENEFITS IN FUTURE ISSUES.

How to Submit a Reunion

The *American Legion Magazine* publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Comrades Editor, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail reunions@legion.org.

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are published free of charge.

Due to the large number of reunions, *The American Legion Magazine* will publish a group's listing only once a year. Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

Other Notices

"In Search Of" is primarily a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as

well as a contact name, address, telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Comrades Editor, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail reunions@legion.org. The magazine will not publish the names of individuals, only the name of the unit from which you seek people. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life memberships by their posts. This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership. Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**.

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

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52nd Ftr Wing 1948-1952, Kingston, NY, 6/22-25, Lew Crispell, (845) 339-5279, lcispell57@hotmail.com; **391st Bomb Grp WWII**, San Antonio, 5/22-24, Clyde Kirkbride, (605) 692-2555, ckirk@itctel.com; **551st Strat Missile Sqdn**, Lincoln, NE, 4/23-26, Ken Fisher, (718) 792-2360, sms551@aol.com

ARMY

14th Armd Div, LaCrosse, WI, 5/3-5, Harold Kiehne, (608) 785-1931; **40th Inf Div 160th Inf Rgt 2nd Bn G Co**, Laughlin, NV, 4/14-16, Bob Kuenzli, (503) 364-5035, rwkuenzli@aol.com; **47th Eng WWII**, Las Vegas, 2/10-14, Howard Morris, (956) 581-0203, betty78572@juno.com; **90th FA Bn 25th Inf Div**, Tucson, AZ, 5/18-22, Raymond Haski, (412) 825-3899, rjhasaki90th@juno.com; **199th Light Inf Bde, Vietnam and Cambodia 1966-1970**, Arlington, VA, 5/23-26, Peter Joannides, (703) 448-0199, brigade199@att.net; **213th Assault Support Heli Co**, Washington, 6/4, Lorinda Boyle, (800) 750-7447, boyles@sunsetcruises.com; **753rd AAA Gun Bn 1953-1955**, San Antonio, 3/7-9, Robert Inselmann, (972) 231-1665; **1439th Eng WWII**, Las Vegas, 2/10-14, Howard Morris, (956) 581-0203, betty78572@juno.com; **MASH 8055, 8063 and 8076, 1950-1953**, Mesa, AZ, 5/28, Eugene Hesse, (480) 854-2747

COAST GUARD

USCG Loran Station Anguar, Alameda, CA, 1/4, T.J. Mackell, (925) 820-4595, tj_m@prodigy.net

JOINT

667th AC&W Iceland, Dayton, OH, April, William Chick, (803) 932-9596, littlechick@msn.com; **932nd, 933rd and 934th AC&W Iceland**, Dayton, OH, April, William Chick, (803) 932-9596, littlechick@msn.com; **Iwo Jima Veterans & Family Assn**, Wichita Falls, TX, 2/19-23, Howard "Phil" Phillips, (714) 990-2560, howardphil@aol.com; **USS Bataan, CVL 29/LHD 5**, Laughlin, NV, 5/4-9, Larry Ankiewicz, (815) 722-0292, shirfank@worldnet.att.net

MARINES

Hotel Co 2nd Bn 26th Mar Rgt, Cape Cod, MA, 6/2-8, Bill Hancock, (513) 738-5446, hancockw@one.net; **USS Texas Mar Det WWII**, Sarasota, FL, 4/30-5/4, Charles F. Cole, (941) 378-0239, chuckndottie@comcast.net

NAVY

Attk Sqdn 144 "Roadrunners", San Antonio, 5/9-11, Fred R. Messmer, (847) 856-3247, fmess3@aol.com; **BMU-2 "Expedition" 2000**, Gatlinburg, TN, 5/15-18, Robert L. Burton, (812) 331-1078, burtroij@hotmail.com; **Navy Base 3115 Cub 10 Hollandia, New Guinea**, Monroe, MI, 6/26-28, Joseph DeMarco, (734) 242-6825; **PBM Mariner/P5M Marlin**, Cape

Canaveral, FL, 5/7-11, Grabe Harman, (321) 631-8648, gbarman@webtv.net; **USS Alabama, BB 60/SSBN 731**, Mobile, AL, 4/10-13, John R. Brown, (817) 431-2424; **USS Amphion, AR 13**, Jacksonville, FL, 5/1-4, Henry Miller, (919) 380-2169, hmillersr@nc.rr.com; **USS Arcadia, AD 23**, Jackson, FL, 5/1-4, Andrew Malone, (516) 681-0725, arcd23@yahoo.com; **USS Aventinus, ARV (E) 3**, St. Louis, 5/4-9, Ed "Willie" Williams, (618) 996-2210; **USS Blakely, FF 1072**, St. Louis, Summer 2003, Merle Houk, (724) 533-2297, mhouk20@hotmail.com; **USS Cadmus, AR 14**, Jacksonville, FL, 5/1-4, Robert E. Baschmann, (716) 655-5415, dinamlrs@aol.com; **USS Cambria, APA 36**, Baltimore, 4/24-27, David Stoll, (419) 738-3786, destoll@bright.net; **USS Charles R. Ware, DD 865**, Charleston, SC, 5/15-18, Thomas Alvarez, (518) 664-7513, munkb@msn.com; **USS Chipola, AO 63**, Branson, MO, May, Fred Schafer, (541) 258-7453; **USS Clemson, DD 186/AVD 4/APD 31**, Fort Myers, FL, 5/15-18, Fred Haag, (412) 921-5425, fk56@bellatlantic.net

USS Conyngham, DD 371/DDG 17, Philadelphia, 6/11-15, Len Gordon, (732) 432-0588, ddgusboat@aol.com; **USS England, DLG/CG 22**, San Diego, 6/12-15, Dennis O'Brien, (714) 961-6840, dennis@ussengland.net; **USS Fabius, ARV (A) 5**, St. Louis, 5/4-9, Ed "Willie" Williams, (618) 996-2210; **USS Gen. W.F. Hase, AP 146**, Palm Springs, CA, 6/5-8, Robert Rank, (360) 697-3277, markjan@telebyte.com; **USS George E. Badger, DD 196/AVD 3/APD 33**, Fort Myers, FL, 5/15-18, Fred Haag, (412) 921-5425, fk56@bellatlantic.net; **USS Gosper, APA 170**, Charleston, SC, 5/1-3, Emery C. Smoak, (843) 563-4009; **USS Jallao, SS 368**, Manitowoc, WI, 5/22-24, Frank Chandler, (954) 472-5410, frank4606@aol.com; **USS Jenkins, DDE 447**, Fredricksburg, TX, 5/14-19, Doug Brown, (915) 944-8850, dougout6@cox-internet.com; **USS Kemper County, LST 854**, St. Louis, June, James Simonson, (320) 253-2167; **USS Kenneth D. Bailey, DD/DDR 713**, Baltimore, 4/24-27, Robert Levine, (617) 327-3286, rlh713@aol.com

USS King, Norfolk, VA, 6/24-27, Terry Forsyth, (360) 378-8685, forsyth@rockisland.com; **USS Libra, AKA 12, WWII & Korean War**, Norfolk, VA, 5/1-5, Robert C. Platz, (845) 469-4980, rjplatz@frontiernet.net; **USS LST 528**, Capon Springs, WV, 5/15-18, Phil Klatt, (860) 613-2876, jkklatt@worldnet.att.net; **USS Macomb, DD 458/DMS 23**, St. Louis, 5/14-18, James Dimond, (901) 873-2865, emcussnret@aol.com; **USS Magoffin, APA 199**, Lexington, KY, 5/7-10, Sam Rubin, srubin@yahoo.com; **USS Marias, AO 57**, Jacksonville, FL, 5/1-4, Ray Bower, (863) 676-4047, dinamlrs@aol.com; **USS Nantahala, AO 60**, Jacksonville, FL, 5/1-4, Jack Gibbs, (734) 455-9306, jegibbs@comcast.com; **USS Pawcatuck, AO 108**, Hickory, NC, 4/24-27, David Willis, (623) 214-9835, dwwshs53@aol.com; **USS Pennsylvania**, Memphis, TN, 5/1-4, Jess Dennis, (901) 357-0263; **USS Perry, DD 844/DMS 17**, Branson, MO, 5/14-18, Will Pruett, (479) 582-3665, willandbjpruett@aol.com; **USS Plymouth Rock, LSD 29**, Great Lakes, IL, 6/5-7, Harry

Andersen, andycporetsnipe@aol.com; **USS Purdy, DD 734**, Mobile, AL, 3/27-30, Larry DiPasquale, (610) 433-4787, chiefdi@juno.com; **USS Rendova, CVE 114**, Charleston, SC, 2/5-8, Eddie Frank, (303) 857-4248, eff5@juno.com; **USS Roanoke, CL 145**, Tucson, AZ, 4/24-27, Forrest Doucette, (520) 743-7383, fhdoucette@aol.com; **USS Schofield, DEG/FFG 3**, Seattle, 5/29-6/1, Richard Cohagan, (770) 623-9022, retemcs@aol.com; **USS Shea, DM 30**, Jacksonville, FL, 5/1-4, Ernie Dyal, (912) 868-6120, erndyal@plantel.net; **USS Tarawa, CV/CVA/CVS 40/LHA 1**, Myrtle Beach, SC, 4/2-6, Frank Grosey, (760) 241-7472, BT2FPG@msn.com; **USS Thomas E. Fraser, DM 24**, Charleston, SC, 5/19-21, Bill Sturgill, (517) 522-8594; **USS Vicksburg, CL 86**, Norfolk, VA, 5/15-18, George Shaffer, (732) 382-3869, dinamlrs@aol.com; **USS Wabash, AOR 5**, Dallas, 3/20-23, Dennis Schrock, (580) 889-7707, drycleaner2000@yahoo.com

USS Waddell, DDG 24, St. Louis, 6/26-29, Bill Brewer, (410) 531-1250, brewerweld@aol.com; **USS Walter B. Cobb, APD 106**, Branson, MO, 5/5-10, James Plough, (865) 475-2070, jp5925548@aol.com; **USS White Plains, AFS 4, 1968-1995**, San Diego, 6/5-8, Stephen G. Edmonis, (915) 676-7379, whiteplainsreunion@cox.net; **USS Winged Arrow, PA 170**, Branson, MO, 4/24-26, James Robison, (402) 488-4419; **USS Yellowstone**, DD 27, Savannah, GA, 5/1-3, Paul W. Bowen, (352) 854-1387, bowp@worldnet.att.net; **VR-21**, Shreveport-Bossier City, LA, 5/15-17, William Gibbons, (318) 347-4641, billy7511@aol.com

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parting shots

Why is Christmas just like a day at the office? You do all the work and the fat guy in the suit gets all the credit.

A WOMAN GOES into the post office to buy stamps for her Christmas cards. "What denomination?" the clerk asked.

"Oh, good heavens! Have we come to this?" the woman asks. "Well, give me 50 Catholic and 50 Baptist."

WHAT KIDS HEAR IN CAROLS

■ "On the first day of Christmas my tulip gave to me"

■ "Later on we'll perspire, as we dream by the fire"

■ "He's makin' a list, chicken and rice"

■ "Noel, noel, Barney's the king of Israel"

■ "Olive, the other reindeer"

■ "Sleep in heavenly peas"

■ "In the meadow we can build a snowman, then pretend that he is sparse and brown"

■ "You'll go down in Listerine"

■ "Oh, what fun it is to ride with one horse, soap and hay"

■ "Oh, come froggy faithful"

IT WAS CHRISTMAS and the judge was in a merry mood. "What are you charged with?" he asked the defendant.



"About these 14 elves listed as dependents ..."



"Are you prepared should one of you melt?"

"Doing my Christmas shopping early," the man answered.

"That's no offense," the judge said. "How early were you doing this shopping?"

"Before the store opened," the defendant replied.

HAD THE THREE wise men been three wise women, they'd have asked directions, arrived on time, helped deliver the baby, cleaned the stable, made a casserole and brought practical gifts.

TWO YOUNG BOYS spent the night at their grandparents' house the week before Christmas. At bedtime, they knelt to say their prayers. The youngest one, eyes closed, started praying at the top of his lungs.

"I pray for a new bicycle," he shouted. "I pray for a new Nintendo ..."

The oldest brother leaned over and nudged the boy. "Why are you shouting your prayers?" he asked. "God isn't deaf, you know."

"No," the boy replied. "But Grandma is!"

AFTER BEING AWAY from home on business the week before Christmas, Tom thought it would be nice to bring



"We should thank the retailers for bringing us together."

his wife a small gift. "How about some perfume?" he thought.

A cosmetics clerk showed him a bottle that cost about \$50. "That's a bit out of my price range," Tom said.

The clerk returned a moment later with a smaller bottle costing \$30. "That's still quite a bit," he grouched.

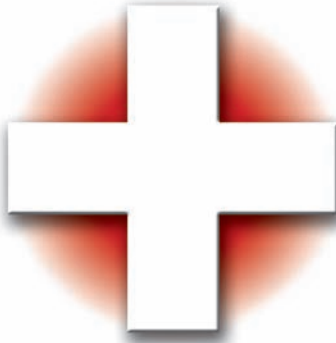
The clerk brought out a tiny \$15 bottle. Tom grew agitated. "What I mean," he said, "is I'd like to see something real cheap."

The clerk handed him a mirror.

WHAT'S A GOOD holiday tip? Never catch snowflakes with your tongue until all the birds have gone south for the winter.

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